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The Women's Quarterly

Feminism in the Post-Monica World

Camille Paglia
Noemie Emery
James Bowman

Julia Reed on a place where chivalry isn't dead. But husbands are *Also* crack moms, taxes, and table manners

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Diary

Introductions

TAKING OVER THE *Women's Quarterly* from Danielle Crittenden is a daunting proposition. I inherit a magazine that is beautifully written, devoid of cliché, and with a high regard for iconoclasm. Danielle has "the vision thing" in spades.

My journalistic background most recently was in the much-maligned field of gossip. I wrote a gossip column called "Charlotte's Web" for the *Washington Times* in the early 1990s and was toiling on the *New York Post*'s "Page Six" column when I was offered this exciting and very different job.

Unlike most people who leave the world of professional gossip, I am not casting aspersions on it. It's hard work and, moreover, piety obliges me to confess it's an art form I learned at my late mother's knee in a small town in the Mississippi Delta. I agree with the novelist Ellen Douglas, who once remarked that "gossip is the lifeblood of literature."

Indeed, gossip is the only subject on which I beg to differ with St. Paul. (He was against it.) In the past few years, information about President Clinton that the mainstream media didn't deign to share with the public often surfaced in the form of gossip. Maverick journalist Philip Weiss, writing in the *New York Observer*, compared the score cards of gossip columnists and Rhodes scholars in getting current events right. The gossips won hands down.

Many have been talking about the moral bankruptcy of feminists in the post-Monica world, but none perhaps so irreverently and pointedly as Camille Paglia in an exclusive *TWQ* interview headlined, "I Told You So!" In a piece on "feminist doormats," Noemie Emery shows that hypocrisy is nothing new for them. It started with Simone de Beauvoir, who let Jean-Paul Sartre walk all over her at the very same time she was formulating the intellectual underpinnings of feminism. And James Bowman charts the decline into ridiculousness of a clique of New York feminists led by New York University's Ellen Willis. Girrrls!

After such craziness, Meghan Cox Gurdon's profile of parenting advice columnist Marguerite Kelly is especially refreshing. Gurdon assumed that the best-selling author got her "mothering smarts" from a stable family. But Kelly's own mother died when she was a child. She lived with a charming but impractical aunt. "My aunt sewed all the time," Kelly told Gurdon. "But she only made evening dresses. So I had these *gorgeous* evening gowns, but otherwise nothing! I used to say, 'Oh, if only I had a skirt and a sweater.'"

What would Marguerite Kelly make of Mother Dog, the pseudonymous author of a much different kind of advice column? Mother Dog responds cheerfully to such questions as, "Mommy, why do all your friends come over at three o'clock in the morning?" Her shockingly nonjudgmental advice is aimed at mothers who are addicted to drugs. Dr. Sally Satel shows us that such moral relativism isn't the most productive attitude when dealing with crack-addicted mothers.

Satel went to South Carolina to report on a policy that allows the state to put pregnant addicts who refuse multiple offers of help in jail. Predictably, certain civil rights activists are up in arms. Satel isn't in favor of routinely jailing crack moms, but, as a psychiatrist specializing in addiction, she recognizes that some form of leverage is often necessary.

We're also delighted to include *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer Amity Shlaes, who shows how the progressivity of the tax code keeps people from improving their lot in life. This is a core issue in an unfair tax system, and it's especially important for married women who work because it's often the second income that drives up a family's tax burden.

AS THE EDITOR of *TWQ*, I look forward to running more serious pieces like these. Both reflect themes that are important to the Independent Women's Forum, which publishes this magazine.

From time to time, however, we'll publish the odd piece with which we may disagree and some other pieces just for the pleasure reading them brings. My friend Sydney Biddle Barrows probably doesn't agree with many of the ideas we espouse here at the IWF. But her article on table manners is a gem. (And, by the way, I agree with every word of it!) Julia Reed's piece on lady murderesses, on the other hand, fits well with the IWF philosophy that women aren't always victims and, in fact, are quite capable of being the perpetrators of violence. But Julia's piece is here because it is—quite simply—one of the funniest things I've ever read. *TWQ* will continue to challenge the conventional wisdom and to publish the kind of entertaining writing you'll find in this issue.

- Charlotte Hays

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Spring 1999 ◆ No. 19

Grace Paine Terzian
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Art Director

Rhonda Mohrmann,
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Klieman, Elizabeth Lurie, Sally C. Pipes

P. O. Box 3058
Arlington, Virginia
22203-0058

Tel.: 703/558-4991
Toll Free Line: 800/224-6000
Fax: 703/558-4994
E-mail: iwf@iwf.org
Website: www.iwf.org

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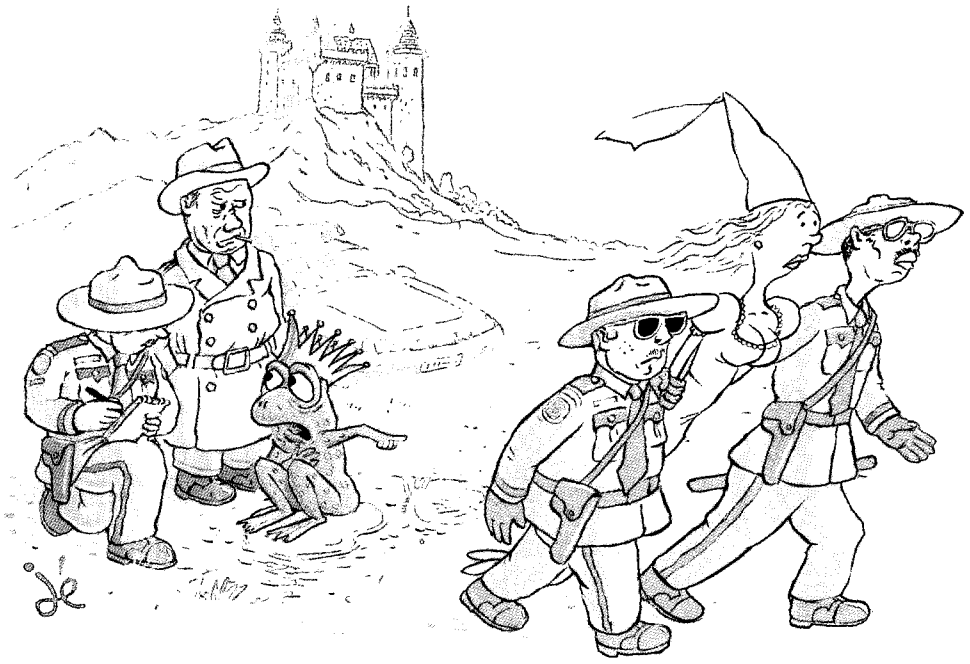

"And then...completely unprovoked...she kissed me!"

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Interview

I Told You So!

Camille Paglia sounds off to *TWQ* editor ***Charlotte Hays*** about the feminist establishment, the Clinton scandals, and why Gloria Steinem is out of touch

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TWQ: The first question I want to ask you is about Monica. Is she a vixen or a victim? Did she get what she wanted?

PAGLIA: Well, Monica Lewinsky herself bores me silly because she is a kind of a prototype of a narcissistic and spoiled American girl that I have been seeing develop over the last twenty-five years as a teacher—not at my school, the University of the Arts, where most people don't have those kinds of economic advantages. But I certainly saw this coming from my first job at Bennington College and later as a visiting instructor at Wesleyan and Yale. And I have been warning about this for years and saying that we are raising up a whole generation of young people who are completely removed from any sense of the outside world. To me, the most damaging thing Monica did to herself was her response to Barbara Walters' early question: "When you went to the White House as an intern, were you interested in politics?" And Monica Lewinsky is so shallow and her family is so shallow that she said, "No, not at all,"—and in a very high and superficial voice that you would use having a drink off Rodeo Drive or something. I was just amazed at that! Our educational system at the primary and secondary level is so flawed that we have girls who would go to the White House as a tremendous career opportunity for themselves and come out of that experience in Washington undented by any sense of wider political or historical realities.

TWQ: What would you advise her to do?

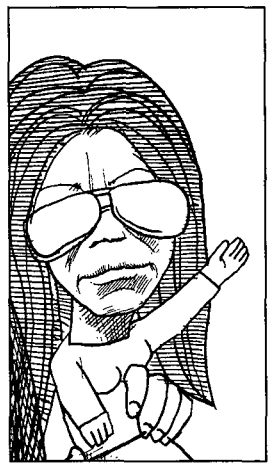
PAGLIA: I would advise Monica Lewinsky to get the hell off the public stage before she damages the cause of women any further.

TWQ: What has been her impact on the establishment feminist movement?

PAGLIA: Ohhh, I have been in *hog heaven* over that! Never, never did I dream that Gloria Steinem would shoot herself in every one of her eight feet—but she did over Monica Lewinsky!

Christina Hoff Sommers was an early warrior in this battle, and we were together in all of this in the early 1990s. And now, of course, a horde of other women have come onto the scene, and we no longer have to take all the abuse. Christina and I have for years tried to get people to see that the feminist establishment did not speak for all women.

"Never did I dream that Gloria Steinem would shoot herself in every one of her eight feet over Monica Lewinsky!"



In fact, I'm the one who coined the term "feminist establishment." When I went out on my first publicity tour after *Sexual Personae* and in my early articles in 1990, 1991, 1992, I drilled that phrase in every interview. I kept on saying, "feminist establishment, feminist establishment"—to try to drive that wedge into media consciousness and to make them understand that the leaders of the feminist organizations based in Washington and New York not only did not speak for all women but they did not speak for all feminists either. They were as divorced from the actual historical currents within feminism as the leaders of the Communist Party were in the Politburo or the more recent Soviet Union, where they were living like the dukes of the Romanovs.

At any rate, year by year, my campaign to portray—*correctly* portray—the feminist leaders as out of touch with women has really succeeded—and they helped me enormously! I feel that my record, in terms of my feminist responses to the various sexual scandals from the early 1990s, is now being proved to have been the correct one. In 1986, for heaven's sake, in my own university, I lobbied for the adoption of moderate sexual harassment guidelines, but at the same time I felt there was a fascist extremism in feminism coming out of Catharine MacKinnon that was pushing these things toward authoritarian extremes that I, as a libertarian, could not support. And so in 1991, I was the only feminist out there who was attacking Anita Hill! One week into those hearings, I wrote a piece for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that begins, "Anita Hill is no feminist heroine." And I felt Clarence Thomas was quite right: He was the victim of a high-tech lynching.

Then when Paula Jones came along in 1994, I was the only feminist immediately out there saying, "I find her case credible." I was on the "Larry King Show" in May 1994—that transcript is in my book, *Vamps & Tramps*. I went against Eleanor Smeal, who was

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saying, "This is just a put-up job by the right wing,"—the same thing Hillary tried all last year. And I said, "Oh, really? Well, Anita Hill's case was a put-up job by the feminist establishment."

It's comical the mess that Steinem made over Monica Lewinsky, but the real hypocrisy was in the Paula Jones case in 1994. If in fact the feminist establishment had responded with principle rather than with expediency—in trying to protect their own conspiratorial associations and affiliations with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party (to which I belong)—if they at that time had spoken out and put pressure on the President, on the President's lawyers, and said that this is a very disturbing charge that Paula Jones is making, then Clinton's legal team might have been in a mood to settle and have persuaded the Clintons to settle at that time and spared the nation all of this *endless* controversy which has diminished everyone. It has diminished America in the eyes of the world, it has diminished the stature of the U.S. government, it has diminished the office of the presidency, and it has poisoned the atmosphere so that young people no longer feel like going into politics—which is going to damage us for decades. It's going to make this country politically vulnerable in the world if we cannot get strong, idealistic people to go into politics. The Monica case is like the cow that has long left the barn! It was the Paula Jones mess that I think historians are going to focus on.

TWQ: What about Juanita? Do you believe Juanita Broaddrick's accusation that Bill Clinton raped her in Little Rock when he was attorney general of Arkansas?

PAGLIA: Okay, my feeling about the Juanita Broaddrick case is not unlike what I felt about the Anita Hill charges. That is, Anita Hill came forward ten years after the fact, making very trivial charges about conversations that made her uncomfortable—when the poor man didn't lay a hand on her, apparently. And I felt that it was like the surveillance of a police state, with Hill coming out ten years later at a crucial moment for Clarence Thomas and making charges about conversations at lunch! I thought that was a fascist trend in American politics, and this seems to me the same thing: twenty-one years later, even if Clinton is guilty, this is un-American, okay? It's undemocratic to say, "This is the final straw; if this had been known, he should have been driven from office." Her charges might well be true. However, as a feminist, I have to say that I have serious questions about the kind of judgment that was shown by her at that age. The story that she told Lisa Myers of NBC—that she and Clinton met briefly at a political gathering two hours from Little Rock, and that Clinton encouraged her to call him. She did that when she was going to Little Rock and he said, "Well, I'll meet you in your hotel room."

Now, excuse me: As far as I'm concerned, by any rational measure, her consent to meet him in a hotel room conveyed to him—especially since he hadn't ever heard from her or met with her before—that she wanted to have sex with him. All right now, he was wrong and brutal in his behavior, and if it were within the statute of limitations, then I think he deserved prosecution for what became an assault. I'm not excusing his behavior in that room, but for heaven's sake, give me a break! That a mature married woman had no idea, was totally stunned when he began kissing her at the window! Now, women cannot behave like this. It was too muddled.

TWQ: You have been very critical of the feminist view of rape. They seem to think it's rape if somebody looks at you crossways. Is this going to change because of the Clinton scandals?

PAGLIA: Well, the recent controversy at Harvard, where the faculty was assembled to vote on a charge of sexual misconduct by a student, shows that the PC attitudes are very deeply entrenched in a lot of places in this country. In terms of sexual harassment and date rape issues, we're in a terrible muddle right now. It's completely confused. The only thing that can be seen clearly is that the authority of the feminist establishment to speak about sexual matters is now over.

Unfortunately, this has led many other people to say, as Michael Crichton did in his recent *Playboy* interview, "Feminism is dead." That's a disaster! That's the ultimate damage inflicted by the hypocrisy of the feminist establishment. Feminism is not dead, but the word "feminism" has become very tarred because of these selfish women who seem to think that all women are somehow pro-choice members of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Just recently, Gloria Steinem opened her mouth again and stated that "Mrs. Dole does not speak for women." And I thought, "After all this time, Gloria Steinem! *Your* views do not speak for all women either! Not all women are of your particular social elite Manhattan clique!" So I think we're beginning all over again.

TWQ: You said that the first female president will be somebody who has her sexual persona straight. Could that be Elizabeth Dole?

PAGLIA: No, I don't think so. Unfortunately. I had great hopes for her,

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watching her over the years, but her recent announcement of an exploratory committee was such a disaster.

TWQ: Why?

PAGLIA: It was one of the worst things I have ever seen on television, by any politician, I have to say. And the media gave her a free pass on it. There's no doubt about it. Because she is a woman, people are very leery about applying to women a standard of critique that you apply to a man. It was just a canned version of her normal speech. The sprightly tone and the giddiness and the coming out into the audience were completely inappropriate for that particular context where she was walking among media people—very cynical media people who were watching with an air of disgust with their cameras and their notepads. It was just a replay of the after-dinner speeches she has been giving for years. She failed to understand that, if she is going to be a statesman, then she has to behave in a statesman-like manner now and that her presentation has to be issues-oriented. I found it condescending—that going up to people and touching them on the shoulder. I think she's a credible vice presidential candidate, but one expects them to be able to step into the shoes of the president. We need a far more commanding figure.

Christine Whitman has it. Here's a woman who is a real sportswoman, who comes out of a mandarin background, but she has that manner—the manner of command. I've seen her come out to the cameras with other governors from the White House and stand there in the portico and give forceful statements to the press and so on. That woman's got it! Now the problem is her rather moderate position on abortion which may make her unpalatable to a lot of Republicans. But there's a woman who is ready to step into the presidency.

Similarly, Dianne Feinstein has the manner. She was mayor of a very fractious city and has a lot of experience—which Hillary Clinton does not!—no experience whatsoever with any political matter outside of sitting inside the White House with her sunglasses on making phone calls to her Yale law school friends.

TWQ: Should Hillary run for the Senate?

PAGLIA: No, absolutely not! She has no talent whatever for that! The media, you'd think, would have learned their lesson because of the Clinton debacle, but they went right ahead in a big stampede and promoted Hillary Clinton, way beyond her abilities. She has no ability to be a senator. She has no ability to work on a team. Basically, she is a coterie-type personality. What she would be ideal for is what she is doing now—which is to go out into the world and to be a spokeswoman for highly educated Western career women and to fight for women's and children's rights or as an ambassador-at-large for the UN. That's her appropriate role.

I want to fall on the floor laughing—imagining Hillary Clinton working well in the Senate with everybody else! Oh, give me a break! I've already joked in print that they would need to build her a private cloakroom on the Mall. This is not a woman who has *any* ability to deal with the mass of humanity. She is the most arrogant, the most moralistic, the most sermonizing and annoying person on the earth—and it is just a joke that the media have allowed this to go on as long as it has.

"Hillary loves eunuch geek men! Oh, my God, look at them all! Sidney Blumenthal, Ira Magaziner, Harold Ickes. They are all weird Ichabod Crane men, all high I.Q. men who have no natural virility."

TWQ: Why did it take us so long to see what Bill Clinton is really like?

PAGLIA: The media are to blame. They dropped the ball, okay? They dropped the ball over the Gennifer Flowers thing. That's the one they should have pursued. If I hear one more time, "Well, she went to the *Star* and many people dismissed her." Why did she go to the *Star*? She went to the *Star*, for heaven's sake, because that tabloid was the only one that would give her an airing of her views! I mean all other media were in such a hurry to sweep the Republicans out of office that they overlooked all kinds of stuff that they knew about, including the Broaddrick case, at that time in 1992.

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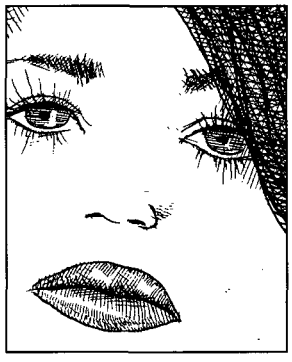
The media are the guilty party in all this! Then the feminist establishment, after that. They were so biased. In the early 1990s, the majority of journalists were and still are Democrats, liberal Democrats, and they wanted Bush out of office. They wanted the Republicans out so they played this game, and then the snake turned around and bit them in the ass! That's why the media have been obsessed with this story for so long. They realized they had been rooked, that they had been suckered! They had been taken! They had been seduced and abandoned by Clinton himself. So I thought, well, one good thing has come out of this—the media have really learned to be much more neutral in their political positions.

But *no*, oh no, no, no! The Hillary senatorial story took off in this giant balloon, and once again there was manipulation of the news to turn attention away from the impeachment disgrace of Bill Clinton. So the media have learned nothing! And neither has the Hollywood establishment.



"The media realized they had been rooked, that they had been suckered! They had been taken!"

TWQ: Will the Clinton marriage last after they are out of the White House?

PAGLIA: I have no idea. You know, they know each other best. She has no friends. All this talk about her great female friendships! She has no friends aside from him. I think they are a dysfunctional pair. I just don't see what they would do apart from each other. I happened to be in the convention hall in 1996 for Clinton's second nomination (I was in Chicago for the "Oprah" show) and I saw Hillary making her speech. I looked up and saw Chelsea: The spotlight was on her, smiling and applauding her mother on the podium. And I saw sitting next to her what I thought was a prison matron or an FBI agent—a mean-looking woman, fierce and unsmiling. Later I learned it was Hillary's mother! Here's Hillary giving the speech, one of the high points of her life, and her daughter is applauding and smiling and these people are giving her standing ovations, and the mother was there, brutally ungiving. And that is the whole story of that family, okay?

Hillary is a mess. And her family was a mess, and the media won't touch it. The media will not go near the mess of Hillary's family! Those brothers, the walking wounded brothers, who look like whipped dogs! And the point is that Hillary's relationship with her family has always been *bad*, really *bad*! You can't understand what's going on with her relationship with Bill until you understand that. But, no, the media are all "Saint Hillary"—wonderful wife—wonderful mother.

In fact, she's a far more interesting character. She's *not* a lesbian. Okay? No, it's more complex than that. She is, I have said, a Protestant nun, and she's closer to Evita than to anything else. I was the first to compare her to Evita: Now everyone notices that. She thinks she speaks for the common people. That woman should not be anywhere *near* our government, okay? —because look at the guys she surrounds herself with—those geeks, those eunuch geeks! She loves eunuch geek men.

TWQ: Like who?

PAGLIA: Oh my God, look at them all! Sidney Blumenthal, Ira Magaziner, Harold Ickes—they all look alike. They are all weird Ichabod Crane men, all high IQ men who have no natural virility, okay? It's really weird. She loves to have her little cabals with them. And the other one—the lawyer David Kendall—they're all alike, and they all bond with her. They're all joined at the hip with her! She's the one who has been calling the shots in all of this. She's the one with the hardline strategy: "Don't settle with Paula Jones." She's the one down the line who's been the mastermind of a lot of this stuff. That woman is an authoritarian who should be kept out of democratic government. She's a tyrant who thinks she knows what's best for the people. She's Orwellian in her attitude toward the rest of humanity. I think she's a great spokesman for women's and children's rights, I really do. I think she should be shepherded off to the proper position—which is making speeches and then retiring to her hotel room to sulk and then getting into the limousine to go on to the next speech.

That's all that woman can do! ◆

Professor of humanities at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Camille Paglia is a culture critic, libertarian feminist, and columnist for the Internet magazine Salon. *She is also the author of four books including* Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson; Sex, Art and American Culture; *and* Vamps & Tramps.

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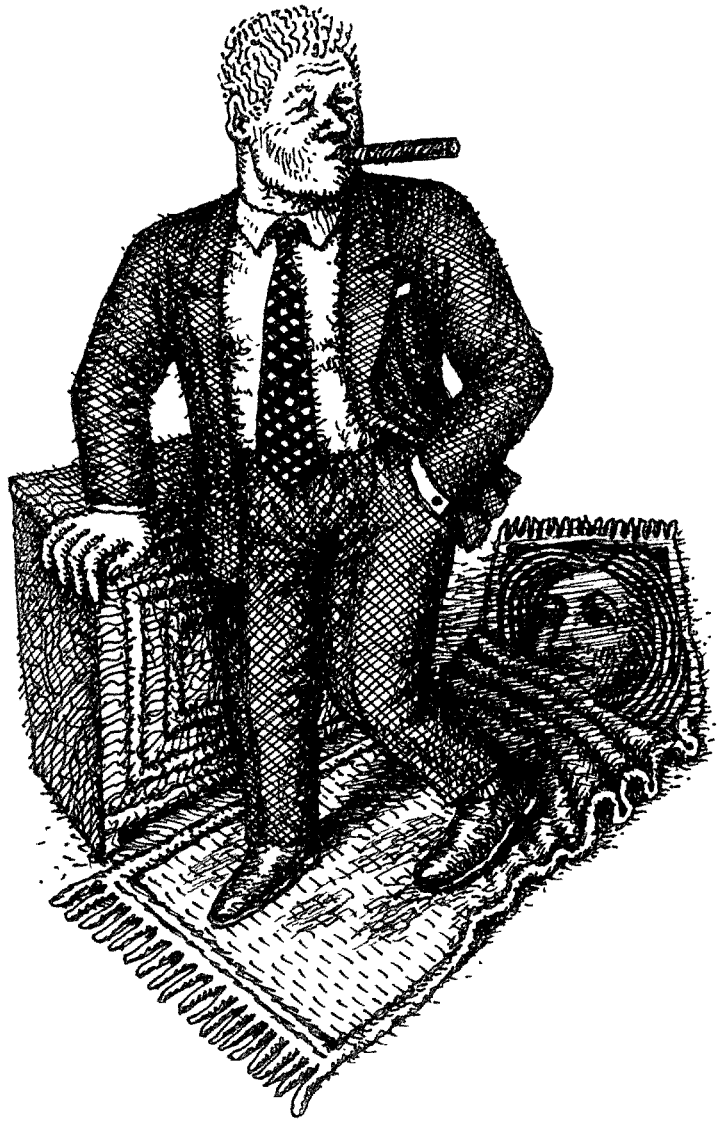
Feminist Doormats

It didn't start with Hillary says *Noemie Emery*



Ever conscious of his place in history, Bill Clinton has sought to link himself to high-profile presidents—Harry Truman, Ronald Reagan, Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy—as a leader of men and the nation. But the facts show that he is closer to another line of political figures—Bob Packwood, Gary Hart, and Ted Kennedy—the less-than-valiant abusers of women; prominent male feminists who in their personal dealings treat women as playthings. Hillary Clinton, too, descends from a tradition that has little to do with First Ladies and much to do with a fairly long string of feminist cultural icons —those who, while loudly declaring their loathing for female servitude, allow themselves to becomes slaves, pimps, or doormats for some truly despicable men.

Simone de Beauvoir, whose 1949 book, *The Second Sex*, helped launch the feminist movement in Europe and the United States, set the stage. Abhorring marriage, housework, and children, de Beauvoir decided in her twenties that she would live in an association of equals with Jean-Paul Sartre. The relationship soon fell, in the words of biographer Deirdre Bair, whose 1990 biography first revealed the full extent of de Beauvoir's degradation, "into the pattern which continued throughout their lives together, one defined mainly by his needs and desires."

De Beauvoir always worked and earned her own living. But at any hour of the day or night, she would put aside her own work to help Sartre with his writings, even though he rarely bothered to look at hers. Sometimes Sartre left her with scarcely more than disjointed scribblings and the injunction, "Deal with this." In order that the great man might muse undisturbed in his ivory tower, de Beauvoir became the heavy, running interference for Sartre with other people.

Tiring of de Beauvoir sexually early in the relationship, Sartre turned his attention to other women, always making certain to tell de Beauvoir about each encounter "in disgusting physical detail." Moreover, whenever the walleyed, pint-sized philosopher wanted one of de Beauvoir's students, he counted on her good offices to help him get the student into his bed. She was fired from a teaching job at the *lycée* after outraged parents lodged a vigorous complaint: de Beauvoir had attempted to procure their daughter for Sartre.

Of one such recruit, Olga, Bair writes, "Olga resented his sexual attentions, and resented even more de Beauvoir's taking it for granted that whatever Sartre wanted, Olga should consider it her honor and duty to provide." Eventually, Olga, Sartre, and de

Drawing by Yuri Kolyadenko

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Beauvoir formed a *ménage à trois*. This arrangement provided material for de Beauvoir's first novel, *She Came to Stay*.

Throughout her adult life, de Beauvoir was approached in cafés and at parties by women, some of them friends, eager to share the intimate details of their couplings with Sartre. At one point, Sartre took up with the woman who was, from de Beauvoir's point of view, the biggest threat of them all: Dolores Venetti Ehrenreich was a rich sophisticate and an intellectual who could participate in that aspect of his life. Ehrenreich was also, Joan Acocella noted in *The New Yorker*, "perhaps not incidentally one of the few women in the world shorter than Sartre."

Panicked, de Beauvoir launched an improbable affair with Chicago writer Nelson Algren. But even in this she timed her travel to visit him in Chicago around Sartre's schedule. Although de Beauvoir was "demoralized by Sartre's continuing parade of women," when he died in 1980, she threw herself, grief-stricken, upon his corpse in the hospital. Sartre, for his part, repaid her lifelong devotion by adopting as his legal heir one of his younger mistresses, thereby ensuring that de Beauvoir would have no control over his literary remains.

De Beauvoir's American counterpart is Lillian Hellman, another "free woman," idolized in the 1970s as a feminist heroine for her aggression, her freewheeling lifestyle, and her flouting of conventional mores. But her relationship with Dashiell Hammett, the burned-out wreck of a writer she met in the 1920s, took on many of the features of the de Beauvoir-Sartre alliance, this time with the addition of world-class benders.

It is true that Hammett nurtured Hellman's work, as a substitute for the writing he could no longer accomplish. But in other ways—the sexual rejection, promiscuity, and sadistic gestures—Hammett's behavior was as swinish as Sartre's. Hammett took up with whores (he introduced some to Hellman) and squandered Hellman's money. He once demanded from her $5,000, which he claimed he gave to a prostitute. He devastated her further by flagrantly carrying on an affair with one of her best friends, Laura Perelman, wife of a mutual friend.

When Hellman became pregnant, Hammett told her that they would bring up their child together. Ecstatic, she rushed to his hotel room with flowers—only to find him in bed with another woman. She had an abortion, which is what Hammett had wanted all along. "He had staged this demonstration to prove that nothing had changed," biographer Joan Mellen wrote. In *Julia*, the dead baby became "baby Lilly," the child of Hellman's fictional friend and alter ego, the brilliant and courageous Julia, whom Hellman claimed to have searched for fruitlessly in Europe on the eve of World War II.

As de Beauvoir with Sartre, so too Hellman finally became Hammett's nanny-in-chief. When Hammett collapsed in Los Angeles, after a particularly bad drinking bout, he was shipped back to New York and Hellman, who met him with an ambulance. Penniless and reclusive, he lived on in Hellman's houses until he died in 1961, a full two-and-a-half decades after publishing his last novel, *The Thin Man*, in 1934.

Spencer Tracy was not a despicable man, merely alcoholic and guilt-ridden. But his problems were grave enough to turn Katharine Hepburn—revered by feminists for her cheekbones, her slacks, her independence, and her lifelong support of Planned Parenthood—into his nanny and nurse. "She constructed her life around his," wrote her biographer, Barbara Leaming. "She arranged her work schedule to fit his needs.... She would appear in as few films as possible, preferably with him."

The otherwise feisty and assertive Hepburn literally slept at the great man's feet. During his last illness, she slept in the maid's room or on the floor by his bed. Earlier, during his stupendous benders, when he would retire to the Beverly Hills Hotel with a case of whiskey, she would station herself outside the door: "Curled up asleep...she lay in the corridor all night in case he needed her. She listened for the crash of furniture and glass." A woman's place is...on the floor?

And what does this say about Hillary Clinton, so like them, and so different? Like them, she had entered into a "union of equals," only to see it become creepy. Like Sartre and Hammett, her man, Clinton, respected her mind, not her feelings. Like Hellman, she took on the role of wage-earner. Like de Beauvoir, she took on the role of the "heavy," the guardian. The $5,000 Hellman gave Hammett that he said he turned over to a prostitute presages the $400,000 Hillary gave Clinton to pay off the Paula Jones lawsuit. The "disgusting physical details" de Beauvoir was forced to hear from Sartre and his women match the revelations of the Starr report. All these women, moreover, tried to deny, to tidy up history. De Beauvoir insisted that her life with Sartre was perfect. Hellman rewrote her life in its entirety, inventing friends (and their children), recasting as a great love what had been an abusive relationship. And Hillary

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Clinton stands up for her husband, smiles in public, goes with him to church.

The excuses made for submission also seem similar. "As far as de Beauvoir was concerned," Bair wrote, "any submission on her part...was very different from the submission/domination she stigmatized.... She considered herself different because it was not 'the prostitution of a woman bought, paid for, and kept by a husband'....What mattered most was that she had been a teacher, earned her own living, wrote books that sold well." Defenders of Hillary offer the same defense: She is a lawyer; she can earn her own living; she can choose by herself to eat dirt. In the *Washington Post*, Liza Mundy quoted a feminist leader: "She's chosen to stand by her husband.... I don't think we should be judging that choice."

YET THE PAIN is terrible. "It hurts so much," Hillary said when Gennifer Flowers emerged with her charges. Forty years after the fact, Hellman raged over Hammett's Laura Perelman affair: "I could kill him for that.... I wish he were alive so I could kill him." De Beauvoir complained that with Olga, "Sartre let himself go...experienced feelings of alarm, frenzy, and ecstasy such as he had never known with me. The agony which this produced in me went far beyond mere jealousy. At the time, I asked myself whether the whole of my happiness did not rest upon a lie."

And what of the men? Has anyone noticed that exposure to feminist women and their lore seems to make men behave badly? John F. Kennedy was a womanizer, but he was effectively housebroken, restrained, and polite in public. It took younger brother Teddy, champion of so many feminist causes, to paw in public, walk away from the scene of a fatal accident involving a woman, and drive his first wife to drink and depression.

It took Bob Packwood, one of the staunchest supporters of abortion rights ever to sit in the U.S. Senate, to drive *his* first wife to depression and sexually assault the office help. And it took Bill Clinton, the first feminist president, not only to boast of "hundreds" of affairs but also to trash the women later and even to be plausibly accused of rape. Perhaps the problem is that the androgyny that is at the core of the feminist project cannot be sustained in real life. Have you noticed that the women in Clinton's life tend to be either short on traditional femininity or feminine to a fault? They are either scarecrows or blow-up dolls. Either Dolly Parton or Marjorie Main.

As far as we know, Clinton has never had a Jacqueline Bouvier or a Mary Pinchot Meyer in his life—a smart, tough, cultured, talented, head-turning beauty, a woman who is on his own educational and intellectual level but palpably feminine and with a feminine sensibility quite different from a man's. Feminist men spend so much time with women who aren't that different from men that the urge to dive into a lush, gushing intern or sail off on a boat for some monkey business must seem irresistible—in fact, inevitable.

One of the things that made Hillary Rodham Clinton a role model for feminists was her initial resistance to men and their expectations of women: her refusal to try to look good, her aggression, her shrillness, her very Rodhamness. Simone de Beauvoir was the same kind of woman. She went out of her way to be different from her well-bred mother. She was rude and badly dressed. "We always know when it's summer," Nelson Algren said. "We tell Simone...to take off the navy-blue wool dress and put on the cotton one."

Women who start out too loudly asserting autonomy often end up giving up too much, for all the wrong reasons, to the wrong kinds of men. "I had no desire to be drained, to be a slave of such a creature," de Beauvoir wrote of the prospect of having a baby. So she ended up slave to a lecher and sadist. Our most independent and assertive First Lady suffered humiliations no other would have countenanced. Does anyone doubt that, at the first reports of a semen-stained Gap dress, Jackie Kennedy or Nancy Reagan would have been out the door, having first smashed the china and furniture? Not Hillary, the feminist doormat, who stood stoically by her louse of a husband. She lied for him, and he let her. But she didn't bake cookies, and this was what mattered.

"No man had ever asked me to fetch the coffee or iron the clothes, because I had no intention of doing it for anyone," de Beauvoir wrote proudly. "I believed that if women felt about themselves as I felt about myself, there would be none of this caretaking that led to so many misunderstandings by men." No indeed. When de Beauvoir wrote this, her life's companion was living with another woman. Such is the vacuity of feminist values. She never kept house for him or made coffee; she simply pimped for him and suffered a lifetime of degradation. Where should one look for a feminist icon? Right at the feet of some heel. ◆

Author of biographies of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, Noemie Emery writes frequently for the Weekly Standard.

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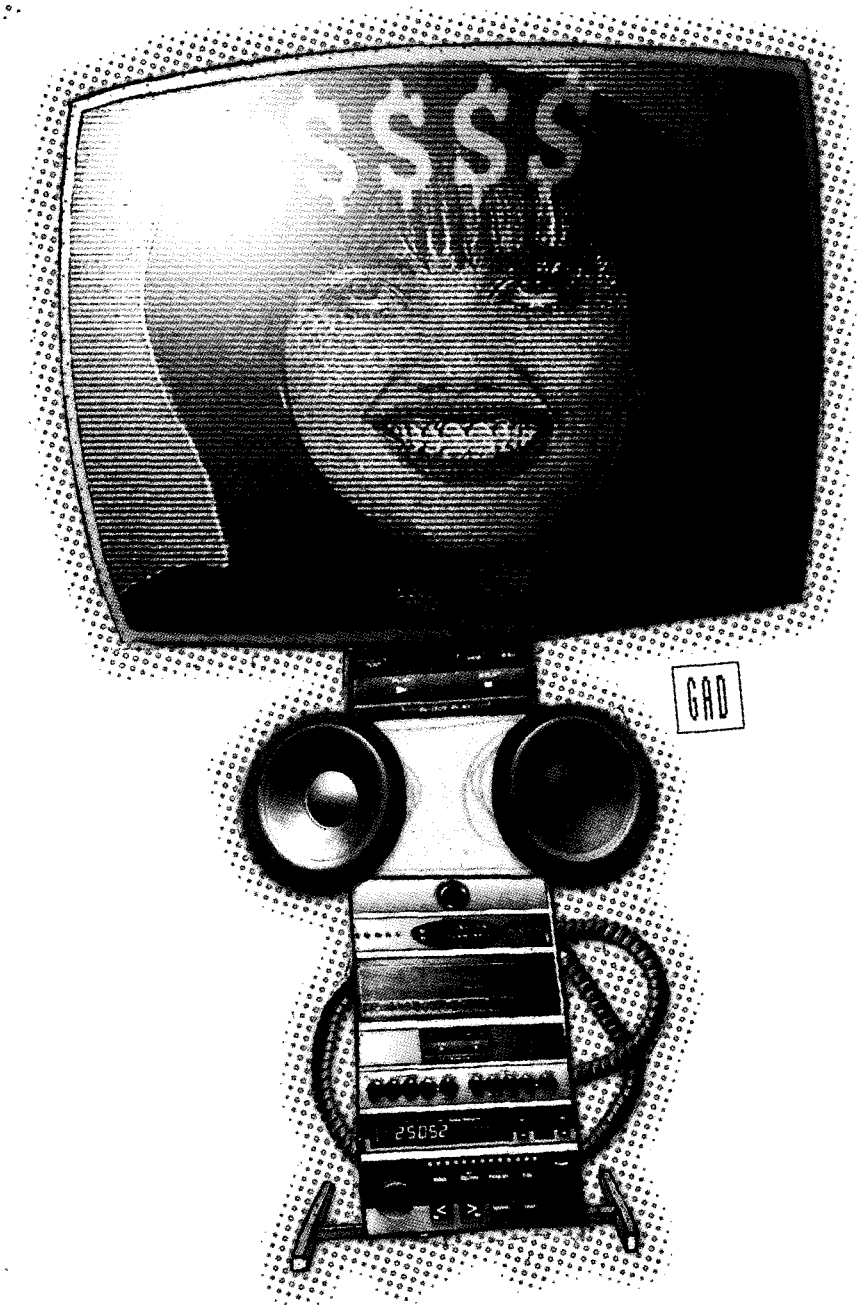
The Girls Get Silly!

Not everyone found Monica Lewinsky shallow. New York "cultural journalist" Ellen Willis celebrates the new Monica feminism. It sounds like old psychobabble to *James Bowman*



WE USED TO think we knew that feminism was a species of latter-day Puritanism. Then, you didn't have to go all the way with the Catharine MacKinnon-Andrea Dworkin, all-sex-is-rape school of thought to recognize that traditional sexual arrangements between men and women must henceforth be regarded as suspect—if only because they were traditional. Even moderate feminists could not always say no to the idea that the act of heterosexual penetration was almost inherently an act of male dominance, inseparable from the oppressive operation of what they had taught themselves to call "the Patriarchy." Well, as they might have said long ago, it is a woman's movement's prerogative to change its mind.

In fact, such Puritanism was never quite congenial to a movement which grew up with the sexual revolution and which made abortion-on-demand its touchstone issue. Now we can say that if the Puritan-feminist model was ever current, it has been changed forever by Monica Lewinsky, a ditzy child-woman of twenty-five whose schoolgirl attitude to life, expressed in a mélange of therapeutic jargon, comically tasteless self-assertion, and mere stupidity is beginning to appeal to some feminists as their own new voice for the millennium. True, Monica-feminism may be theoretically undeveloped, though it has obvious connections with the thinking of Naomi Wolf and others.

The most forthright expression of this new strain in feminist thinking has come from Ellen Willis, directrix of something called the "cultural journalism program" at New York University. Writing in the *New York Times*, she celebrates the bad taste, bad manners, and immaturity on display in Lewinsky's television appearance with Barbara Walters as markers of a new

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feminist consciousness—simply because so many male journalists and commentators found them disgusting and embarrassing. For these journalistic critics, writes Willis: "Public fascination with Monica, O.J., Princess Diana, Lorena Bobbitt and their ilk is mere mindless prurience.... But these stories are compelling because they speak to primal human concerns. They are also newsworthy because they dramatize the central conflicts and obsessions of contemporary culture, especially issues of sexual morality and male-female relations. The Lewinsky scandal has prompted an impassioned national conversation on the relationship of the political to the personal, public authority to private behavior; on sexual privacy versus 'family values'; on female sexual autonomy and victimization."

And of what trenchant observations does this interesting "conversation" consist? Here is a sample from Willis' own store. Having been impressed ("It's easy to see why Mr. Clinton was attracted") by the forthrightness and "exuberant lustiness" of Lewinsky's proclamation that her having flashed her thong at the President was a "subtle, flirtatious gesture," she says that her heroine is nevertheless, "in no sense tough, as the stereotype of the sexually aggressive woman would have it."

Instead, "She turns the clichés inside out. If she was needy and insecure, so, she suggests, was Mr. Clinton, who was lonely in his marriage and sucked in his stomach when he unbuttoned his shirt. Their mutual neediness was part of their bond, and sexual intimacy was, in part, a way of assuaging that neediness on both sides. Ms. Lewinsky's insistence that the connection was emotional as well as physical is entirely believable, if only because most of us know from experience that no relationship goes on for months without getting complicated."

Now there's a conversational nugget worth the attention of a Boswell! So far from persuading us that "she turns the clichés inside out," this celebration of Monicaism only confirms the clichés' empty silliness. In fact, the conversation depends on the persistence of the clichés. Of course President Clinton was "needy" too. And so, it could be argued with equal plausibility, is everyone in search of sexual gratification. But a category which includes everyone is no category at all, and the conversation which makes use of such categories is mere prattle. In the same vein, Willis goes on, telling us that in Monica's account: "[She] makes hash of the idea that a young woman cannot truly consent to sex with her powerful boss. This story is not about a sexual harasser and his victim, any more than it's about a stalker and her prey, nor is it simply about a president and an intern. Once they were involved, Ms. Lewinsky says, she saw Mr. Clinton less as President than as a man. This was a naive and disastrous view, insofar as it impelled her to confide in her friends, including Linda Tripp, as if the President were just another guy. Yet it expresses an undeniable truth: if only for the moment, sexual pleasure can be a great equalizer and intimacy can strip people of their social roles."

Once again, we see a "conversation" perpetually on the point of dissolution into banality and hype—in short, the language of modern journalism. Monica-feminism naturally expresses itself in therapy-speak ("I think, for me, in some ways therapy is sort of praying," Monica says) but it has also learned a lesson from the journalese of someone like Andrew Morton, for whom hype is virtually a language (Monica is "the most humiliated woman in the world," he says). It was not by accident that the man chosen to tell us Monica's Story could write that Bill Clinton is "a flawed individual riddled with doubt and desire" while pretending to think that he is conveying information. What does this mean? Of whom cannot it be said with equal truth?

In the same way, Willis must pretend to be engaged in an act of communication when she tells us that there is "an undeniable truth" in Lewinsky's having seen President Clinton "less as President than as a man." And how does the fact of the fallible humanity that he shares with his mistress annihilate—except in the terms of this kind of mealy-mouthed journalism—the disparity of their "social roles"? If mere "neediness" and personhood is a defense against the charge of harassment, who can ever be convicted of it? This is precisely the sort of talk that earlier generations of feminists would have anathematized, but Willis, perhaps in her role as suprema of "cultural journalism," sees a higher feminist virtue in the very banality and foolishness of such observations, simply because men don't like them.

So it is that she tells us, with a girlish breathlessness worthy of Monica herself, that "after the show I received a delighted E-mail from my old friend Karen Durbin, the film critic for *Mirabella*, calling it 'the most pro-sex piece of television I've ever seen in this country.'" Wow! Durbin must either be too busy watching movies to see much television or else she has a very idiosyncratic definition of sex. Her reaction is contrasted with Pete Hamill's who, in a column about the

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Lewinsky matter for *Digital City* entitled "Will Everybody Please Shut Up, Please?" wrote nostalgically of "tight-lipped gangsters going silently to the electric chair." He might as well have come right out with what he meant: Will all these women please shut up? Indeed he might. But that he wants them to shut up seems to Willis a sufficient reason for them not to.

Moreover, in a stunning reversal of sexual categories we thought well established, we find that it is now feminist to be "pro-sex" while the sexual modesty and self-control preached so fervently—to men anyway—by the founding mothers is now associated with men, and with the "repression" which in Victorian times, claims Willis, "produced a thriving pornography industry." Just by the way, if that is true, then what has produced the thriving pornography industry in our liberated age? Maybe a thriving pornography industry requires something less than "repression" to jump-start it? Most shockingly of all, she concludes as follows:

"Watching Monica, I couldn't help thinking about the other woman who had recently talked about Bill Clinton: Juanita Broaddrick. Her portrait of Mr. Clinton is starkly different from Ms. Lewinsky's. Her charge of rape is unproved and, absent tapes or DNA, almost certainly unprovable. Yet the two women have something in common: The high-minded press wishes they would go away. When women discuss sex in public, male prerogatives and male hypocrisy come under scrutiny. And that makes a lot of journalists (especially male journalists) nervous—not because sex is trivial, but precisely because it isn't."

WHO EVER SAID that sex is trivial? No one that I know of. The objection to Lewinsky's public pronouncements is not that she is talking about a trivial subject but that she is trivializing an important one, and for personal gain. This she has done and continues to do, with the connivance of Willis and others in the media, by attempting to characterize a sordid episode in which she was used for sex as a "relationship"—in order to get a little use of her own out of it. ABC made some $25 million out of the Barbara Walters interview, and the fillip it gave to Lewinsky's book sales contributed to the estimated $3 to $5 million that she has made so far out of her celebrity. But all of this is perfectly OK with the Monica-feminists, just so long as the tastelessness of the spectacle gets a rise out of men.

If mere "neediness" is a defense against the charge of harassment, who can ever be convicted of it?

More seriously, the suggestion that the charge of rape is morally indistinguishable from any other kind of sex-talk, so long as it becomes a part of the sisterhood's "conversation" and is thus embarrassing to hypocritical males, is appalling. To be fair to Willis, I don't suppose her guilty of any such shockingly irresponsible reasoning. In fact, she is not guilty of reasoning at all, but rather allows her emotional satisfaction at what she supposes to be points scored against the male adversary to lead her into a bit of specious rationalization. Monica Lewinsky herself engaged in a similarly unsuccessful attempt at thought when asked by *Time* magazine to comment on Broaddrick's allegation:

"What is hard for me to understand with this story is that I think the word rape has a very different meaning and connotation today than it did twenty years ago. Twenty years ago, women were not apt to say no. And I'm not saying that means she asked for it. It sounds like it was an unpleasant experience for her. And I feel differently about her than I do about what Paula Jones has said. I feel bad for everybody, that this topic, that these kinds of things are being discussed and aired."

Such a mess of error and stupidity is perhaps not surprising in someone who has the mind and emotional maturity of a spoiled sixteen-year-old, and its conclusion is of course exactly the opposite of Ms. Willis'. But why should we care about that? The important thing is that it shares with her a proud willingness to proclaim the paramountcy of feeling over thought. That, we must suppose, is what Monica-feminism would claim on behalf of all women, thus returning them to the way women were supposed to be by those supposedly "chauvinist" men of the pre-feminist era. Does this mean we can all go back to the way we were then? Somehow I doubt it. ◆

James Bowman is the American correspondent for the Times Literary Supplement (TLS). *He also serves as media critic for the* New Criterion *and film critic for the* American Spectator.

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A Dangerous Place for Crack Moms?

A unique policy in South Carolina helps addicted mothers get clean. Why does the ACLU hate it so much? *Sally Satel* reports

When the crack cocaine epidemic ripped through Charleston in the late 1980s, doctors and nurses at the Medical University of South Carolina literally begged pregnant addicts to get drug treatment. But not one of the 119 pregnant addicts who came to the hospital between October 1988 and September 1989 sought treatment, either before or after their babies were born. Of these women, ten miscarried, and the remaining 109 were still using when their children were born.

Frustrated, a group from the Medical University met with Charleston Police Chief Reuben Greenberg and County Solicitor Charles M. Condon (now state attorney general) to develop a get-tough drug policy that would compel pregnant women to accept treatment. In 1989, Charleston unveiled its new policy: A woman could be charged with child neglect or delivery of drugs to a minor if she (1) was using drugs shortly before delivery, (2) tested positive more than once during the third trimester, or (3) tested positive during the third trimester and subsequently refused an appointment with a substance abuse counselor or prenatal clinic.

Ten years later, the policy has become statewide after various regions developed their own local strategies. The policy has also been softened, and the law is enforced only if a woman has refused multiple offers of help, continues to use drugs even while in drug treatment, or has evaded several layers of protection by child welfare agencies. Predictably, however, feminists and civil rights activists are waging war against the policy. Especially galling to them is a 1996 state supreme court ruling that bolsters the drug policy. The court ruled that a viable fetus after the twenty-third week has legal standing as a human being. The case in question—one of many triggered by the policy—was prompted by a Greenville woman who was arrested for using cocaine in the last weeks of her pregnancy. Compounding the frustration of the foes of the drug policy, the U.S. Supreme Court subsequently refused to hear an appeal.

Although I am not in favor of jailing pregnant addicts, as a psychiatrist specializing in addiction, I know from clinical experience that without external pressure few addicts are likely to volunteer to get help. I prefer, moreover, that these matters be handled in

Drawing by Yuri Kolyadenko

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a civil rather than criminal manner. But the indispensable factor is leverage. "I wish addicts could be arrested for jaywalking," a colleague of mine says, only half-jokingly, "because that way the courts could get them in treatment and make sure they stayed."

When the courts impose limits and expectations on treatment, the clinician doesn't waste precious time bargaining over how many drug tests a patient can fail without incurring serious consequences. When the courts force addicts to get help, my work with them is well defined: I am the patient's ally, helping her conform to these rules. We are working together toward recovery, developing strategies to resist temptation, and discovering reasons to stay sober—reasons more important than merely avoiding punishment.

One of the most outspoken critics of the state's policy is Mary Faith Marshall, director of the Program of Bioethics at the Medical University of South Carolina. Marshall views pregnant addicts as victims—victims of society's "moral judgmentalism about substance abuse," or victims of wily politicians who "demonize" addicted mothers and exploit "the symbol of the anti-mother" to push their own agendas.

And the children of such addicts? Marshall rejects the contention that crack addicts tend to be unfit mothers. Moreover, continuing the victim theme, she argues that, since only women can become pregnant, placing restrictions on their drug use is a form of sexual discrimination. Marshall's ethics views are of course a frontal assault on common sense, but when she calls addiction a medical disease no different from asthma or diabetes, she is well within the mainstream of medical opinion. Indeed, many psychiatrists now consider addiction a "chronic and relapsing brain disease," and the federal National Institute on Drug Abuse has launched an all-out campaign to educate the public on this matter.

Other experts view drug abuse by some as inevitable and contend that all society can do is alleviate the anxieties that drove the addict to drugs in the first place. This philosophy—which is popular in the Netherlands, a country with a union for junkies—is called "harm reduction." Its essence: a nonjudgmental attitude about substance abuse. Indeed the California-based Harm Reduction Coalition puts out a newsletter that features the ultimate in nonjudgmentalism—an addicts' advice column penned by one Mother Dog, the *nom de plume* of a drug-abusing mother. Mother Dog addresses questions such as what you tell the kids when they ask, "Mommy, how come all your friends come over at three o'clock in the morning?"

To be fair, most opponents of the South Carolina law don't regard the use of crack and heroin as an acceptable alternative lifestyle. But, for whatever reason, they fail to see that it is the more helpless of the mother and child pair—the fetus—that requires the greater measure of society's protection. In the beginning, there was also a legitimate concern that pregnant addicts might stay away from prenatal clinics for fear of being arrested. But the available data indicate that this hasn't happened. Women continue to seek prenatal care and deliver their babies in hospitals rather than "on the streets" as was predicted.

On a recent trip to South Carolina, I visited family practitioner Leigh Beasley's brightly lit clinic set off from the main road on a gently sloping hill in Pickens County, a hardscrabble place. Beasley works with Jo Ann Musto Brink, a substance abuse counselor, and nurse Trish Locklair. They are good-natured women, who are deeply committed to their "girls." They all told me the same thing: Because somebody else does the coercing for them, they can get down to business and concentrate on health. "Most of the women tell us when they are using, but we would have missed nineteen girls last year if we hadn't done the testing," Beasley told me. Of the seventy-four women who tested positive last year, only two went on to have babies who tested positive.

There was, moreover, no drop-off in the number of women who came to the clinic after drug testing began. "The women all talk to each other and they know, by now, that our goal is to get them drug-free before they give birth, not to get them into trouble with the law," Brink said.

Malissa Ann Crawley is frequently cited as the personification of what's wrong with South Carolina's policy. Both Crawley and her baby, Antwon, tested positive for cocaine when he was born in 1991. As a result, she was arrested three weeks later for unlawful neglect. She pled guilty and was given a five-year suspended sentence and placed on probation, conditional on staying clean and receiving substance abuse counseling. In 1992, she gave birth to a little girl. Both mother and daughter tested positive for cocaine. Based on the infant's prenatal exposure to cocaine, Crawley was once more indicted for unlawful neglect. A judge quashed the charge, but Crawley was soon in trouble again—she attempted to knife her dealer in a domestic dispute—a violation of probation.

Her lawyer from the South Carolina ACLU managed to keep her out of jail for several years, but only after

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her probation was revoked and she faced real jail time, did Crawley finally stop using drugs. In March 1998 she began serving her time and was released early this year. Today she is drug-free and employed. Crawley's lawyer and *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert condemned South Carolina's "crack mom policy," as it has been called, since it took Crawley —whose parenting skills they praised —away from her children. What they failed to mention was that it was the looming reality of jail that inspired her finally to change. "It's ironic," South Carolina's Deputy Assistant Attorney General Catherine Christophillis told me, "that Malissa Crawley, whose case is upheld as an example of the program's inhumanity, is one of the best examples of its success."

In another instance, as with Crawley, warnings were not enough for Cornelia Whitner. Whitner lost custody of her two children after abandoning them in the midst of a crack binge in 1991. Shortly before Christmas the next year, Whitner, who was pregnant with her third child, appeared for sentencing before Pickens County Judge Frank Eppes. Eppes gave her probation and warned her to stay away from drugs and alcohol. Violating these terms, he said, would mean ten years in prison. Tevin was born seven months later. He tested positive for cocaine.

A look at Whitner's record shows she's no *symbolic* anti-mother: Before Tevin was born, she had an impressive rap sheet that included convictions for shoplifting, petty larceny, trespassing, and using a false name. She knew she'd go to jail if she used again, but she did it anyway. Crusading lawyer Lynn M. Paltrow took up Whitner's cause—it was Whitner's lawsuit, in fact, that led to the state supreme court's ruling that a viable fetus has legal standing. (Paltrow, incidentally, once went on "Nightline," where she assured Ted Koppel that the bad image of drug-abusing mothers such as Whitner is the public's fault. "Everybody is willing to call these women selfish," she said, "when the real problem is that they aren't selfish enough. All the things that can harm the fetal development of the babies they want, first and foremost harms them.")

Most of the addicts affected by Charleston's regulations are black and poor. In 1993 the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York filed a $3 million lawsuit against the Medical University of South Carolina. The suit claimed that the civil rights of ten women who had been tested for drugs at the Medical University of South Carolina were violated. Because eight of the women were black, the suit charged racial discrimination.

Charleston Police Chief Reuben Greenberg—who is black—bristles at the charge of racism. "Punishment? Discrimination?" he fumed. "I'd consider it discriminatory if they didn't go out of their way to save black babies. The doctors at MUSC wanted to level the playing field for these unborn babies, at least during the last three months before they were born. They

Marshall argues that, since only women can become pregnant, placing restrictions on their drug use is a form of sexual discrimination.

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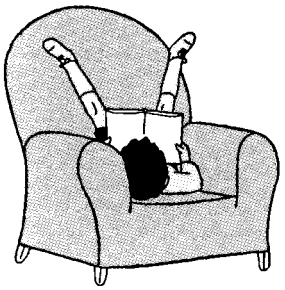
Eureka!



BRITISH EDUCATORS HAVE made a startling discovery—that boys like to read adventure stories. In fact, British Education Secretary David Blunkett is proposing that the National Curriculum guidelines include more classic adventure books. The radical idea that young males enjoy reading adventure stories is being put forward at a time when educators in England are concerned that boys lag behind girls in academic achievement.

Indeed, tests administered at the end of primary school show that, while 80 percent of the girls measure up to expected standards, fewer than two-thirds of the boys do. Noted a senior government official in a BBC interview: "Robert Louis Stevenson is more likely to appeal to boys, and teachers should be aware of that." Education Minister Estelle Morris refuted the notion that there's such a thing as boys' books and girls' books. Even so, she gingerly admitted that "it is true that some books have a content boys prefer to read."

What might these books be? Here's a sampling from the National Curriculum's trailblazing list:

BOYS: *The War of the Worlds, The Time Machine, Treasure Island, Robinson Crusoe, Frankenstein*

GIRLS: *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre, Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

But then the English have always been on the cutting edge ....

wanted to give them the same chances as a kid with middle-class white parents."

The lawsuit also failed to grasp some important facts. Most of the women tested by MUSC of course were black; MUSC is the only local facility that provides obstetrical care to the predominantly black indigent population, the population in which crack use is concentrated. Judge C. Weston Houck of the U.S. district court ruled in 1997 that there was no basis for the charge of racism. "The catalyst for targeting these individuals was a policy designed to prevent cocaine abuse in pregnant women," Houck wrote. He noted moreover that a "substantial majority" of the plaintiffs in the suit had quit using cocaine.

WHILE THE DIRE predictions in the 1980s of cohorts of horribly brain-damaged ghetto children happily proved false, it is absurd to suggest that a child raised by an addicted mother has a fair chance in life. "On their own, most true addicts simply cannot take adequate care of their children. Without societal intervention, their children are condemned to lives of severe deprivation and, often, violent assault," author Douglas J. Besharov wrote in his book, *When Drug Addicts Have Children.* Forty percent of confirmed cases of child maltreatment involve alcohol or drugs. Children whose parents abuse drugs or alcohol are over four times more likely to suffer from neglect as children of sober parents. And crack use can cause dangerous, late-term developments such as placental detachment.

In another area, psychologist Barry Lester of Brown University found that children born to crack addicts may suffer damage to their central nervous system affecting their IQ and language skills. Though the IQ difference that Lester found seems minor at first—an average of 3.26 points lower than that of the matched control children—it takes on significance when placed in the proper context. Lester explained why before a group of journalists. "For those of us in this room where the average IQ is 120," Lester said, "a 3-point IQ difference is meaningless. However, for children growing up in poverty, the average IQ is ten or fifteen points or more below the norm of 100 without drugs. For these children, three points can make the difference between normal and abnormal [because] even small differences that do not start out as abnormalities could become abnormalities if exaggerated by environmental factors."

In short, no matter how much treatment we offer, many addicts won't take advantage of it without external pressure. But the good news is that treatment—when completed—is extremely effective in achieving sobriety. And there is evidence that addicts who get into treatment, either through court orders or employer mandates, benefit as much, and sometimes more, than those who seek treatment on their own. *Time* magazine called South Carolina "a dangerous place for pregnant women who abuse drugs." But it's probably one of the safest for their children and often for the women themselves. ◆

Sally Satel, M.D., is a senior associate at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., where she is writing a book on public health and political correctness. She is also an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, lecturer at Yale School of Medicine, and science adviser to the Independent Women's Forum.

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Honey, Hand Me That Lead Pipe

Christopher Caldwell on macho men

ONE OF THE great journalists I know—and one of the great gentlemen—doesn't own an umbrella. If it rains, he enters the building looking as if he just swam ashore. He associates umbrellas with sissies, and I suppose he should know. He fought with the Marines in the Pacific for three years in World War II, including several of the worst island battles. Where hand-to-hand combat is the norm, sissification's a drawback.

What my friend practices every time he gets soaked to his skin, of course, is *machismo*. The word has taken on a bad ring. I once did an electronic data search and found that macho was nowadays used almost exclusively as an adjective to modify some rotten—and often obscene—noun. That, in fact, is the way I remember everyone using it during the mating years of college. A girl would say to her girlfriend, "He doesn't pull any macho crap, does he?" Which meant: "If he's working-class, I don't want him in my bed."

The word "macho" has sprung loose of whatever meaning it had when the Spaniards brought it back from Mexico. It still, however, retains a bit of imagery common to the age of the conquistadors: too-tight trousers, senseless risk-taking, hard drinking, and random violence. Thus, quite naturally, macho came to be a synonym for "working class." And the repudiation of macho is just another way of celebrating the disappearance of working-class virtue.

Not "rationalizing" or "explaining away"—celebrating. There is a whole triumphalist True Folklore of cautionary tales about *machismo*. Tops is the story of the sailors who witnessed the U.S. nuclear tests in the Bikini atoll in 1946, then ignored the stern warnings from their commanding officers not to go ashore. Okay, so they were dumb. So they died. But anytime prior to the Starbucks era, what woman wouldn't have preferred the guy who rowed ashore to an early death?

And who but the worst snob or the most ethnocentric bigot could profess to be mystified by how *machismo* came about? In the days before the conquistadors established the first Sexual Harassment Hot Line, any Spanish peasant knew the uses of manhood, knew there might come a day when, to protect his wife's or daughter's honor, he'd have to go *mano a mano*, if you will, with some lugnut twenty years younger and a foot taller than he. So far, understood. And yet manhood—that bundle of virtues involving courage, self-definition, and ordering one's family around—is an acquired habit, because it cuts against the urge to run away from trouble and blend in with the crowd. How do you develop it? Through *machismo*, which is nothing more than manhood practice. You say, "I'm the toughest guy in Aldea Mierda. Watch me set my hair on fire. Watch me drink a quart of whiskey and jump off the third floor of Town Hall." This kind of stunt was indispensable until the working class began to disappear.

What's mystifying is that today, even though we no longer have any roles for which men need to practice, even though we profess to despise macho, we still need a form of it. Crypto-machismo is everywhere. There's cold-macho: The coolest guy on the street in Montreal in January is the guy without the coat. There's sleep macho: We know President Clinton can get by on three hours of shuteye a night because he tells us, and he tells us because he thinks we'll think him manly for it. There's muscle-macho, which most workmen practice: Why carry three boxes of books at the same time when you're getting paid by the hour? And there's rain-macho, which I've already gone into.

Ah, well. Until the day when a woman hears a bump downstairs at 3 A.M. and turns to her husband and says, "You get your sleep, honey; I'll grab the lead pipe and go down and check it out," *machismo* will endure. If we're going through a period in which it's ridiculed, that's only because yuppies are trying to trick the working class into giving up yet another of their precious prerogatives. But talk to someone who's rich enough to, say, own a country house or a private plane, and what will they tell you? "Hey! Watch me dive into that thirty-nine-degree water. Watch me climb on the carriage house! Watch me fly my plane drunk!" ●

Christopher Caldwell is senior writer at the Weekly Standard.

Drawing by John Springs

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Lady Murderesses

Julia Reed on a place where chivalry isn't dead but some husbands are

All my life I've heard the story of Howard Dyer's Abraham Lincoln. Dyer, the flamboyant, one-armed lawyer from my hometown of Greenville, Mississippi, was one of the state's most famous defense attorneys. The Lincoln was the black Continental he bought with his fee from keeping Erma Abraham out of jail after she blew a hole in the top of her husband's head with a .38 revolver. The car was also a symbol of a simple truth. A woman in the Deep South could, generally, kill her husband and walk away.

"I don't know why people say we're chauvinistic down here," my father has said more than once. "Look at how nice we are to women. A woman can kill her husband in the state of Mississippi and get away with it."

Mrs. Abraham killed her husband in 1966 in Leland, Mississippi, a town of about five thousand people ten miles west of Greenville, and the same place where Ruth Dickens, the wife of a respected cotton broker and planter and a scion of Delta gentry, had hacked up her mama with some hedge clippers eighteen years earlier. Mrs. Dickens actually served some time—matricide is a little touchier than husband-killing—but the governor commuted her sentence after a little more than six years, and she came back to her place in the First Baptist Church, running the nursery and teaching Sunday school.

Mrs. Dickens was still serving her sentence in the state penitentiary when her two daughters were presented to society at the Delta Debutante Ball in Greenville. But she was able to attend the debutante ball thanks to two ten-day "holiday suspensions" granted by the governor before he simply let her go home for good.

She died six years ago in her Leland home, at the age of eighty-nine, from heart failure, and more than forty years after her release from prison. Her obituary in the *Delta Democrat Times* mentioned her "pioneer Delta heritage," her graduation from Hollins College, her marriage, her extensive church involvement, and her membership in the Leland Garden Club. It did not mention her mother's murder or her time in the penitentiary.

There has always been a double standard for capital cases, and not just in the South. Of the twenty thousand people lawfully executed in this coun-

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try since Colonial times, fewer than four hundred of them have been women. In 1996 when the governor of Illinois commuted Guin Garcia's death sentence, he went out of his way to say it wasn't because she was a woman, but of course it was. When born-again pole-axe murderess Karla Faye Tucker was executed in Texas, many people who basically oppose the death penalty found themselves arguing that Tucker should be executed so that women would have the same rights as men.

But, the fact is, we in the South will do almost anything to keep intact the romanticized ideal of pristine Southern womanhood. The desire to hold onto that myth is much stronger than the desire for truth or justice—ideals never held in much esteem down here in the first place. And to let go of this ideal would be to admit that the Civil War happened, and that things are different now, which no one really wants to do.

We are also used to living with contradictions, chief among them the mixture of politeness and violence, of extreme piety and the desire to do whatever the hell we want to do when we want to do it. It is entirely possible for a woman to come home from church, put on a housecoat, and then blow out her husband's brains while he sleeps; *there just has to be a reason.*

Howard Dyer came up with a whole set of reasons for Erma Abraham. The first thing he did was put a gold crucifix around Erma's neck and get what seemed like everybody in town, including her employers at the cotton brokerage firm, where she had been a longtime secretary, to come in and testify to her devout Episcopalian ways and her reputation for "truth and veracity." The second thing Howard Dyer did was turn Will Abraham into a monster. Mr. Abraham was a well-liked former mail carrier, the founding coach of the successful Leland High football team, who, according to the Greenville paper, the *Delta Democrat Times,* was "an ardent fisherman and fond of growing flowers." The only time I ever saw him was in a picture taken after he was dead, shown to me by Howard Dyer III, who assisted his father in the case. Abraham was lying on the couch in his den in front of the television, his pipe and tobacco pouch on the table next to him. One eye behind his metal-framed glasses was open, and one was closed, there was a hole at the top of his forehead, and two rivers of coagulated blood flowed from his nose. "Look what else," Howard III told me, directing me to the top button of his trousers that was unfastened at the waist, just as his father had pointed out to the jury thirty years before.

"That suggestion was made to Howard by a former deputy sheriff," said John Webb, who prosecuted the case. "He said, if you can get about three or four rednecks on that jury, that [undone button] will work to your advantage." Howard Dyer was not big on subtlety. Mrs. Abraham told a packed—and completely stunned—courtroom that her husband had become impotent, and, afraid that he would lose her if he could not satisfy her in some other way, had begun forcing her into "unnormal" sex acts, particularly oral sex. When a technical word for oral sex was printed in the newspaper, it was, according to then-editor Hodding Carter III, for the first time. It was almost certainly the first time that most of the members of the all-male jury had heard it said aloud. (Their eyes, according to the paper, "were fixed upon the floor.")

But there were more shocking revelations. "Mrs. Abraham Is Victim of Brain Injury, Amnesia, Psychiatrist Tells Court," was the headline. Just in case anyone wanted to make an issue out of the fact that Mrs. Abraham had originally claimed that an intruder had shot her husband or that she had wrapped the gun in foil and hidden it in the deep freeze—and her husband's wallet in the cedar chest—a Jackson psychiatrist named Willard Waldron arrived at the Washington County courthouse in a Rolls-Royce to say that the defendant suffered from "acute brain syndrome" rendering her incapable of remembering certain events such as the murder.

On June 20, 1966, one day after closing arguments were completed, and the day before fifty-eight years of the widely ignored Prohibition officially came to an end in the state of Mississippi, the jury found Mrs. Abraham not guilty by reason of insanity. The judge explained to Mrs. Abraham that she would be held at Whitfield, the state mental hospital, until her condition was improved "so that you can resume your place in society."

She resumed that place just sixty days later, but in her absence it was discovered that the "rigid moral and spiritual beliefs" ascribed to her by the good Dr. Waldron did not include an aversion to stealing. Her former employers, who had paid for her bail and defense, including Dr. Waldron's fee, discovered that Mrs. Abraham had been embezzling tens of thousands of dollars from them for years. When they asked Mr. Webb, the county attorney, to take action, he reminded them that, "If she was crazy when she killed her husband, she must have been crazy when she took the money."

It was hardly a surprise that a jury

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would accept without question that a woman could go crazy in the face of "unnormal" sex acts, since Southerners tend to accept that people can go crazy without much prompting at all. Women are deemed especially susceptible, especially for legal purposes. Dr. Benella Oltremari, a pathologist from Greenville, found out her husband, Marty Albinder, was cheating on her with his secretary and shot him five times in the chest and stomach with both a .38 and a .44 Magnum. He was taken to the Delta Medical Center, but so was she. "I viewed her as seriously upset and badly in need of medical attention immediately after the incident," said Oltremari's lawyer, former state senator H. L. "Sonny" Meredith. The hospital said she was "in shock" and kept her in a private room with guards at the door. By the time the police were allowed to question her, Albinder, who now refers to himself as "Bullets," had miraculously pulled through and pronounced the whole thing "a tragic accident."

Men have been known to snap as well, most often just before women snap and kill them. Mrs. Abraham testified that on the night she shot her husband he had appeared at the kitchen door with a terrible look on his face. "I've never seen such a look," she said. "He looked like he was crazy."

Two years later, when Peggy Bush shot her husband, a prominent lawyer, in their Jackson home, it was after a dinner party and during, the newspaper made a point of noting, the telecast of the Miss America Pageant. Millard Bush went to the bedroom of the couple's fourteen-year-old daughter, Pamela, yelled at her about the size of her bills at the country club, told her he didn't like the way she looked or what she wore, and said he was going to kill her. "I don't know what made him completely snap, which is what he did, completely snap," Peggy Bush told the jury (the first in the state to include a woman). She added that he cursed her using words she could bring herself to repeat only by using the initials "g. d." and "s. o. b."

She also insisted that she thought she was shooting her husband with a "pop gun" (it was actually a .22). She was found not guilty after the jury deliberated for three minutes, still a record in the state.

A WOMAN, IN all her selfless maternal benevolence, taking the fall for someone close to her, is also a familiar theme in these cases. A famous murder in Nashville, Tennessee, involved my aunt Jane's best friend, Jean Wilson, who ran her husband through with a samurai sword. Although she was charged with the crime (and of course acquitted) the rumor to this day in the salons of Belle Meade, the wealthy Nashville enclave where the Wilsons lived, is that she was covering up for another member of the family. There was no way to tell. Before Jean Wilson called the police, she called my aunt Jane, who came over and cleaned up and put the blood-soaked curtains in the trunk of her car. They had not, they explained, wanted the place to look such a mess if so many people were going to be trooping in and out. When the police did get there, Jean Wilson told them that she and her husband had just been horsing around on the bed with the sword, which had been hanging on the wall. The Wilson death, like so many more, became a tragic accident.

The former headmistress of the Madeira School, Jean Harris, tried the "tragic accident" defense with less success when in 1980 she shot her lover, the Scarsdale Diet doctor, Herman Tarnower, saying that she had gone to his house to kill herself, but that when Tarnower had tried to get the gun away from her it killed him instead. The problem, the ballistics experts testified, was that the shots were fired from about seven feet away while the man was lying in bed. She served fifteen years of her sentence before being granted parole. Harris should have had Sonny Meredith as her lawyer. When I told Meredith I had never had an accident with as many guns as Dr. Oltremari used on Marty, he looked at me with a totally straight face and said, "It wasn't but two."

Jean Harris' biggest problem was that her trial was in White Plains, New York. Also, instead of a crucifix she wore a mink coat and made too much of her innocence and integrity instead of the fact that she had been sorely mistreated by a two-timer who had gotten her hooked on diet pills. Do you think, I asked my father, Jean Harris would have gotten off if she had been in Mississippi?

"Oh hell, yes," he said. "That cat sounded like a very bad guy." ◆

Julia Reed is a contributing editor of Vogue. *This piece was adapted with permission from the* Oxford American, *which is published by John Grisham in Oxford, Mississippi.*

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Move Over, Dr. Spock

Marguerite Kelly has sold more than 800,000 copies of *The Mother's Almanac.* Her children have turned out well, too. ***Meghan Cox Gurdon*** gets some tips

"American children have been ignored, denied, idolized, pampered, and despaired of, but seldom enjoyed."

— Marguerite Kelly

Marguerite and Tom Kelly with their brood: baby Nell, Meg, Katy, and Michael

IT'S A SUNNY winter afternoon when I knock on the battered front door of Marguerite and Tom Kelly's rambling, three-story house on Capitol Hill, just a few blocks behind the Supreme Court. The alabaster splendor of official Washington has given way to faded gentility; a few blocks further on the neighborhood gets rough.

I've been told that Marguerite Kelly's is one of Washington's great untold stories, but my interest is closer to home: She also happens to be the country's foremost exponent of sensible child-rearing. With two squabbling children of my own, I'm hoping her maternal wisdom will rub off.

The door opens, and there is Marguerite, exuding motherly comfort. She's a small, rounded person with twinkly, intelligent eyes and a soft, humorous voice. That voice—firm, reasonable, forgiving—also informs her writing. In her syndicated newspaper column, "Family Almanac," and in the 800,000 copies of her book, *The Mother's Almanac*, thus far sold, Kelly advocates an approach to family life that is adventurous, generous-hearted, and refreshingly old-fashioned. Not only is her advice sound, it is, as advertisers boast, "proven to be effective."

Marguerite's skills as a mother—a job she calls "the most creative I have ever done"—have produced four accomplished children. Columnist Michael Kelly, whose weekly contributions to the *Washington Post*'s op-ed page make waves all the way to the White House, edits the highly respected *National Journal*. The eldest, Katy, is an illustrator and writer for *USA Today*; daughter Meg writes novels; and Nell, the youngest, is a film-editor-turned-teacher. Not only have the Kelly children distinguished themselves professionally, but they're also all happily married and producing grandchildren at a rapid rate.

We go inside, and Marguerite pours coffee. It's the sort of house where the floorboards creak, silver gleams amidst a profusion of dark furniture, and the light filters in giving off a Faulknerian feel. "Marguerite came from broken-down Southern gentry, who all lived in these big houses," says Tom Kelly of his wife's Louisiana childhood. "So it looked like home."

Marguerite smiles and offers dried apricots from a dainty glass dish. "To me, it's been my idea of safety—a house big enough for relatives to come and stay if they needed to, where people could get married or hold reunions," she says. "Growing up, we had a lot of silver around, and old furniture, and it didn't matter how dent-

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ed or bad it was, you had the sense that all this stuff had been there forever—and would always be there."

AHA, I THINK: So she comes from a nice, stable family. *That's* where she gets her mothering smarts. But I'm wrong. Quietly, Marguerite explains that her father was irredeemably dissolute, and that when she was seven years old, her mother died after rushing back into a burning house to rescue the last of her five children—a boy who had already escaped. The children were parceled out to relations; their father would visit occasionally.

"I think the loss of her mother forced her to start fresh in how she thought about motherhood," her daughter Meg tells me later. "It made her really aware of the importance of raising children to be independent."

"If parents love their child and respect him, he will love the whole world and be kind to it; if he is self-sufficient when he is small, he will learn the tough joys of independence; and if he has wide, firm boundaries when he's young, he will reach for freedom when he's grown."

"Independence" occupies a substantial chapter in *The Mother's Almanac*, and crops up repeatedly in Marguerite Kelly's conversation. Not for her the cosseting and constant supervision of the modern family. Children, she believes, need culture shocks.

"It's very important for kids to be brave," she says. "I've only articulated that to myself since the Clinton matter came up. That man cannot tell the truth because he has no courage at all. It doesn't take courage to send war planes, it takes great courage to be honest, to be loyal, and to say no when you want to say yes. I think you have to instill the courage in very basic ways, which means letting children take well-supervised risks."

Educative risk-taking started early for the Kelly children. Their mother made a point of driving them through dangerous neighborhoods and taking them shopping in unsavory ones. As the children matured, the character-building exercises became progressively more swashbuckling. "When Katy and Mike were fourteen and thirteen, we sent them to Ireland for seven weeks to work on a farm with some relatives of Tom's," Marguerite says. "They were going into private school, and I felt very strongly that I wanted them to see the other side of life. They *loved* it. They had to keep a diary—" ("Wow! What a mother!" I blurt, abandoning journalistic objectivity. She's still talking, but I'm no longer listening. My mind whirls with exotic possibilities for my own children. When they're old enough, should I send them to India? Australia? Canada?... Abruptly I'm jolted out of my reverie.)

"...We let Michael—and this was a mistake—at fifteen go with a neighbor to help him take a small boat from Thunder Bay, Ontario..." "This was a retired navy captain who had a drinking problem," Tom interjects.

In fact, Michael tells me later, he was the problem. He had lied when he told the captain he knew all about boats, and, Michael says, "his frustration mounted to despair with me. We kept four-hour watches, and I'd steer faithfully for ten minutes, then get a sandwich, and come back to find I'd forgotten what compass point I was aiming for. I hit things—a bridge, a tree, even a huge sea-going buoy."

Tom and Marguerite chortle in the safety of hindsight. I begin rethinking my plans to export my children wholesale. That's the problem with risk: It's...risky. And however hungry readers may be for Marguerite Kelly's parenting advice—and they are—our society has reached the point where most parents won't let their children go even to the corner store by themselves. In my local park, the talk among us late-nineties mothers is not about excitement or adventure; it's about shielding our precious darlings from accidents and predators. What our children lose in our so doing is unacknowledged.

"Although we consider parents to be the king and queen of a family, we think they must respect their subjects now, if only to avoid the guillotine later."

"We were lucky," Meg says of growing up a Capitol Hill Kelly. "Our parents would have dinner parties and we'd be invited down to talk to the guests. They were writers, newspaper people, and we got to listen to arguments about politics. It was a world in which children were, quite casually, respected."

It was also a world in which children, even two-year-olds, were expected to work. Marguerite rolls her eyes politely at the current fashion for imparting "self-esteem" by endlessly praising one's children. She is convinced that children gain lasting confidence by learning to master tasks, whether it's reading a book or washing up the dishes.

"Today's parents grew up in the sixties and seventies when families were pretty permissive and the standard of living had hit a new high," she wrote in a recent "Family Almanac" column. *"Now parents usually put soccer, birthday parties, TV and computer time ahead of chores, which encourages a child to think that, yes, he really is the most important person in the world. And that's not fair to him because one painful day he's going to find out the truth: He's not!"*

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From puberty onward, the Kelly children all had jobs. Meg found the experience so valuable she plans to do the same with her own children: "At fourteen, I got a drug store job. It was a wonderful, semi-sheltered way to learn about the world." Marguerite considers early work experience so important that she has employed generations of neighborhood children around the house. Whether mothers should work outside the home seems a less important issue for Marguerite.

"I don't think you can make these rules for people," she says. "Just as a parent has to read the child's cues, and go with that, so do you have to read your own cues."

She herself was ambitious. At seventeen, she won promotion from "copy kid" to teen society columnist on the now-defunct *New Orleans Item.*

"Who is that man?" Marguerite recalls asking a colleague, after meeting the paper's ace reporter, Tom Kelly. "I'm going to marry him." In 1953, the couple moved to Washington to care for Tom's aging parents; two years later, the first of four babies arrived. Marguerite wrote nothing for publication between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five. She became, instead, what she calls a "professional volunteer."

"The big thing about Mom is that she didn't work outside the house, but she always had a million things going," says daughter Katy. As a Democratic precinct captain, she organized voter drives—"We gave out free Popsicles to every kid who brought an adult to register"—block clubs, and urban beautification schemes.

The Kellys also took up the case of Edgar Labat, a black man who spent seventeen years on death row in Louisiana on an accessory to rape (of a white woman) conviction, and who initiated a correspondence with Tom. When their campaign succeeded, and the verdict was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, Labat came north to live with the family for a few months. "He was a nice, sweet, gentle guy; we gave him a room in the basement," Marguerite says lightly. "That was a big culture shock for the kids."

"It takes hard work and hard thinking to rear good people. The job is interesting, although the hours are bad, starting from the first day."

"After my third baby I thought I knew so much about kids that I started writing notes for a book while I was still in the hospital," Marguerite says. "Then I put it all aside, and ten years later when my youngest, Nell, went to first grade, I pulled out my notes and agreed with *nothing* I'd written. I was appalled.

"I really thought that I could mold the kids to be just what I thought, and that is not how it works. You can give them character and courage, but you can't control their strengths and weaknesses. You can control their behavior but not their temperament."

Marguerite and her co-author, Elia Parsons, maneuvered their proposal for *The Mother's Almanac* past the dubious editors at Doubleday ("young parents don't buy books") and into publication in 1975, and, with revised and supplemental editions, it's been selling steadily ever since.

She started the "Family Almanac" column twenty years ago, replying to letters that, she says, tend to reflect the media obsessions of the day. For a while, sexual abuse—real and imagined—dominated the correspondence. Nowadays, people write for advice on homosexuality, "trans-gender issues," circumcision, and the ever-vexatious problem of sibling rivalry. But, she continues, there has been one noticeable change in the letters since 1979.

"When I first started this column, the operative pronouns were always I, me, mine, and the letters were almost always from angry wives," Marguerite says. "In the late eighties, the letters changed, and I couldn't tell what it was until I went back and reread the old ones. More men are writing, and it's gone from first person singular to first person plural, as in 'our marriage,' and 'our child.'" The Kelly children say that in their household, it was always that way: our house, our children, and Marguerite speaks of her husband with as much pride as she does of her children. Tom is one of the family's three Pulitzer Prize nominees (Katy and Michael being the others); he edited his wife's book, and is plainly a full collaborator in the execution of her ideas.

"There was absolutely seamless unity between my parents," on how to raise children, Michael confirms, adding that his father's "glowering disappointment, if we ever lied or stole, was their nuclear weapon." The coffee is cold. It's almost noon, time to go. Yet I find I'm reluctant to leave the warm kitchen and the inspiring company. I have one last question: How did she manage to get her family through the tumult of the cultural revolution of the sixties so apparently unscathed?

Tom is the one who answers: "Marguerite raised the children the way she did because she came from a well-defined society. Her relatives were awfully weird, but they had very clear ideas of behavior," he says. "So she never felt she had to join the current fad."

Marguerite smiles. ◆

Meghan Cox Gurdon is a Washington writer.

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Table Talk

Sydney Biddle Barrows reveals what *really* would have shocked her mother

I CAN SEE it on the cover of *Town & Country*, "The Bad Manners Diet": You may eat anything you want as long as you do it in the company of one or more persons who have deplorable table manners. Think about it: How many bites of *paté,* potatoes au gratin or chocolate mousse could one possibly eat whilst one's dining companions are slurping their soup, eating directly out of the serving dish or holding the fork like a cudgel? I think I just might be on to something here....

I may have been accused of many things (and I have), but I have never been accused of having bad table manners. That is something my mother would *really* have had a hard time dealing with. Even when I am alone, eating from a tiny tray in my den, I still put my (cloth) napkin on my lap, place the salad plate on the left, and cut my green beans into bite-sized pieces.

It all started out as soon as I was able to hold the baby-sized sterling silver fork and spoon given to each of us children by our maternal grandparents. Once we had stopped eating out of bowls and had graduated to plates, a matching pusher was added. For those of you whose first and/or only experience or knowledge of pushers involves disreputable, menacing individuals who sell controlled substances in unsavory parts of town, a pusher is a utensil which resembles a hoe with a wider-than-hoe-like blade which a small child holds with the left hand and uses to push recalcitrant peas and other difficult food items onto a fork. Once one is dexterous enough to master the intricacies of a knife safely, the pusher is retired and the knife does double duty, ensuring that one's fingers never come in contact with the *petits pois.* A piece of bread is not an acceptable alternative unless, possibly, one is dining in a very casual Italian restaurant and no one is looking.

Speaking of bread, I think the first time I was ever shocked, *shocked* by another's table manners, was when I spied someone sitting across from me cut his dinner roll with his knife and fully butter both halves. In fact, it still shocks me. I can overlook someone buttering his bread from the butter server before I can stomach watching someone cut the roll with a knife. I am equally, and regrettably more frequently, horrified to sit down at a dinner table to find the knife and fork on the wrong side of the plate. Perhaps dropping Home Ec was not such a good idea after all.

"The fork is the key," asserts my friend Sue, and I have to agree. Using the shovel grip—while doing precisely that—or the ukelele grip—holding the fork like said instrument in the left hand, while wielding the knife with the right—is a dead giveway that the user is NOKD (translation: Not Our Kind, Dear). Ditto the unfortunate who rests any utensil, in whole or part, back on the table after having used it, however briefly. I can think of a number of otherwise very reputable restaurants where I have witnessed this horror.

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The correct use of various implements was not the only thing Mother deemed important. Woe to the child who rested his or her left forearm on the table while eating. "If you are so tired that you have to prop yourself up, you are too tired to sit at the table," my mother said. Not only was talking with one's mouth full always good for a reprimand, but what one was talking about often was too. "Sydney, this is not dinner table conversation," is a sentence I heard many times growing up. Committing a "boarding house reach" never went unnoticed, and the alternative had to be "may I please have the butter," not "can I have the butter," if the goal was actually to take possession of the butter dish while your roll was still warm.

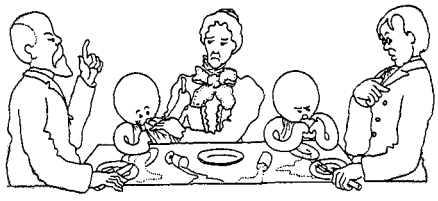
Sometimes all these rules and regulations just didn't make sense. I mean, who cares if you come to the table with no shoes on? It's not as if we had a glass table and you could see those bare toes under there! Hair rollers and bathrobes I could understand, but shoes? And I don't think my brother would have ever considered coming to dinner shirtless any more than he would have come to Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner tieless.

An unscientific poll of a few of my closest haute WASP friends quickly uncovered the most egregious and shocking lapses of table manners of them all: leaving a spoon standing in a tea or coffee cup, or a soup or dessert bowl (exception: a wide-rimmed bowl). Every one of us agreed that the sight of such a thing was so painful and made us so anxious that we would probably reach over and remove it ourselves, which, of course, would render us even more impolite than the original transgressor. But, as my friend Helen wryly noted, "More people will forgive bad behavior than bad manners." Indeed, each of my friends had more than one story of a budding relationship that bit the dust soon after the first formal meal together. Fortunately, most of our conversations about this took place over the phone, because most of these lurid tales did not fall under the category of acceptable dinner table conversation. "My mother would have overlooked burping in church before she'd overlook bad table manners," declared Beckye. Definitely not dinner table conversation.

So why are table manners important and why is it so important to instill good ones in our children? "Perfect table manners are one of the greatest gifts my mother ever gave me," says Melinda. "I can go anywhere and never have to worry whether or not I'm doing things properly." Every one of the women I spoke to said that knowing what to do gives them a tremendous sense of self-confidence during times when making a good impression is extremely important. Interviewing for a big job, meeting the parents of a new beau, that business dinner on which a major deal hinges, lunch with the president of the co-op board—proper table manners send the message that you are, or deserve to be, part of the club, the team, the group. My mother, whom, of course, I consulted for this article, sent me the following note: "The most important thing about impeccable table manners is that they are not intended as an empty show or facade, but as a genuine expression of one's consideration and respect for one's dining companions." ◆

Sydney Biddle Barrows is writing Getting a Little Work Done, *the stories of men and women who've had plastic surgery.*

Oh, They Lead Disgusting Lives!



Are there any good books for instilling good table manners in children? My mother used *Goops and How to Be Them: A Manual of Manners for Polite Infants Inculcating Many Juvenile Virtues Both by Precept and Example, with Ninety Drawings,* by Gelett Burgess.

Published around the turn of the century, the book featured wonderful cartoon drawings of the ill-mannered Goop family. The witty verses were cautionary:

The Goops they lick their fingers,
And the Goops they lick their knives;
They spill their broth on the tablecloth –
Oh, they lead disgusting lives!
The Goops they talk while eating,
And loud and fast they chew;
And that is why I'm glad that I
Am not a Goop – are you?

Even now, when my siblings and I spy the last, coveted morsel of meat on the serving platter, we eye each other slyly. Then in unison we burst into the verse about "no matter how you wish for the last one on the dish...." If you'd like to use the *Goops* with your children, Dover Publications offers a delightful edition complete with the drawings I remember so fondly. ~ *S.B.B.*

Drawing from Goops and How to Be Them *by Gelett Burgess. Reprinted with permission from Dover Publications*

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The Taxman's Dirtiest Secret

By *Amity Shlaes*

In August 1966 George Harrison led the album *Revolver* with a song about a new presence in his life—"Taxman." The lyrics were simple. "Let me tell you how it will be. There's one for you, nineteen for me. 'Cos I'm the taxman." 1966 was exactly the right time for the Beatles to discover "Taxman." This was the period when they were just settling into the notion of their stupendous success. In the Britain of the 1960s, that meant they were taxed like lords and dukes, at confiscatory rates ranging far above half their incomes. No matter how much they earned, and they were earning more than they had ever dreamed, it seemed the government took more.

Older Americans may no longer identify quite so much with the Beatles' music. But they can identify, more than ever, with George's shock. This is because, in some sense or another, we are all Beatles now: people in the process of achieving more than we thought we could. With our achievement comes the George Harrison experience. Suddenly we—little me!—are paying taxes in the 30, 40 or even 50 percent range. Even if we aren't yet confronting such rates, we are aware that our work may soon get us to that territory. We look around, stunned, for we don't really feel rich. In fact, we may feel tired because we have been working harder than ever to make the progress we've made. So we wonder: Why is it that my effort earns a bonus from my employer and punishment from my government?

This is a fundamental moment in our relationship with government. When we struggle with taxes that come with our new prosperity—call them "success taxes"—we are struggling not with some peripheral tax pitfall but with the core principle of the code—progressivity. Progressivity is a success tax, but it is also the mother of all taxes, the tax that dominates our lives like no other. Progressivity institutionalizes the class warfare that politicians tell us they are waging on our behalf.

Yet progressivity is not an intuitive thing: As we look at our tax bills, we find we are forced to explain exactly how it works. Many of us simply fall back to assuming that progressivity is what makes rich people pay more taxes. That's not right. When the tax rate is 25 percent, a person who earns $100 pays $25. A person who earns $200 pays more. He pays $50. That's called a proportionate system, and it's not what we have.

What we have is progressivity, a system that taxes people more the higher up the income scale they go. Our first dollars are taxed at lower rates: nothing at all, or 5 or 20 percent. But the last dollar we earn is taxed at higher rates, rates that, on the federal level, currently range up to 39.6 percent. Medicare drives that rate up to over 40 percent. Some states push that figure toward 50 percent by applying their own progressive tax structure. We encounter the progressivity problem at many points in our lives. But only with significant achievement, only when we actually come close to managing the seemingly Herculean feat of actually doing in life what we set out to do, do we move up the tax brackets toward the 39.6 percent, or 45, or 50 percent zenith; only

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then do we know progressivity's full damage.

Today Washington talks as if progressivity was etched in stone—no reform plan, not even the intrepid flat taxers, dares offer a program totally devoid of progressive elements. Yet, when pollsters ask Americans how they feel about progressivity, different answers emerge. In 1995, for example, the *Reader's Digest* published the results of a poll by Everett Ladd, director of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut. The poll showed that a broad majority of people felt that 25 percent was about the share of their money Americans should pay in all their taxes. It also showed that Americans earning less than $30,000 agreed, along with all other earners, that 25 percent should be the top tax burden for families with incomes of $200,000. That's well below the average taxes many such families actually confront.

What those laboring in the trenches of everyday life have sensed is that progressivity doesn't do what it says it does: Tax the rich. Indeed, the secret of progressivity, and all the other little success taxes we have constructed over time, is that they aren't really success taxes. They are taxes on *becoming* successful, or merely improving one's lot. Those who are truly successful, the superrich, get to stay that way and even build their wealth. Those who aren't, or aren't yet, get the following message: Stay where you are. When you move upward, you will start to lose a lot of breaks that are valuable to you.

How America, land of strivers, came to target those strivers like so many Iraqi chemical-weapons factories is an instructive story. Certainly, the nation's founders never advocated "success taxes." Thomas Jefferson ran for office in 1799 on a plan to ban all internal taxes—and won. One of Jefferson's promises was that a "wise and frugal government" would not "take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned."

Every time the nation's leaders doubted their convictions, they had only to look at Europe. There numerous success taxes and big, rigid government killed enterprise and dampened free spirits. De Tocqueville, a French nobleman whose family had barely made it through the French Revolution, knew all too well what damage could be wrought in the name of punishing the wealthy. In the same years that he was traveling in America, one of his more gifted countrymen, the economist Frederic Bastiat, unfurled perhaps the best explanation ever on why governments favor success taxes. Lower earners who would not normally tolerate a tax, Bastiat noted, will do just that when they believe that the rich are being taxed even more. "People are beginning to realize that the apparatus of government is costly. But what they do not know is that the burden falls inevitably on them. They have been led to believe that if their share has been heavy until now the Republic has a means, while increasing the general burden, of shifting at least the larger part of it onto the shoulders of the rich. Fatal Illusion!"

For fifty years after Bastiat sketched it, most Americans still retained their understanding danger of his fatal illusion. America's bedrock principle was still that people should be able to keep the fruits of their own labor. Bourke Cockran, the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives before the turn of the century, thought that installing a progressive tax was a terrible plan. He noted such a tax would fall

GREEDY HAND, DEVIOUS MIND

The father of the modern American state was a pipe-smoking executive at R. H. Macy & Co. named Beardsley Ruml. Ruml, the department store treasurer, also served as chairman of the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. In 1942, not long after Pearl Harbor, lawmakers raised taxes radically, hoping to capture twice as much revenue as the previous year. As March 15, 1943, neared, it became clear that many citizens were not filing tax returns. Enter Ruml, man of ideas. Like other retailers, he had observed that customers didn't like big bills. They preferred making payments bit by bit, in the installment plan, even if they had to pay for the privilege with interest. So Ruml devised a plan, which he unfolded to his colleagues at the Federal Reserve and to anyone in Washington who would listen. The government would get business to do its work for it by collecting taxes for it. Employers would retain a percentage of taxes from employees every week—say, 20 percent—and forward it directly to Washington's war chest. This would, among other things, hide the size of the new taxes from the worker. Ruml hadn't invented withholding. His genius was to make its introduction palatable by adding a powerful sweetener: the federal government would offer a tax amnesty for the previous year, allowing confused and indebted citizens to start on a new footing. It was the most ambitious bait-and-switch plan in America's history. ◆

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heavily on a crucial group: younger people starting out, first-generation arrivals, average Americans who might have little but who hoped to one day make a success of their lives. "The hope of wealth, which is universal, is a greater force for order than the possession of wealth, which is confined to a few." In those years William Jennings Bryan campaigned on a Democratic Party platform that explicitly rejected progressivity.

As has often been the case in our history, the Republicans ended up doing the dirty work. The Republican leadership in the House and Senate, and a Republican president, Taft, were the ones who began the institutionalization of class warfare. When they wrote the Sixteenth Amendment, the law that gave us the income tax, the Republicans went where the Democratic Party had refused to go. Their amendment said that, "Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived." This left the door open for progressivity and the income tax.

Scholars today often wonder whether the Republicans actually realized what they were setting in motion. Theirs was supposed to be a levy on the wealthy. When it did come, the new income tax, passed by a Democratic Congress in 1913 as part of the Underwood-Simmons Tariff Act, exempted all but two in a hundred of American households. Its top rate was 7 percent, less than what individuals pay today for their share of payroll taxes. It is fair to say none of the Republicans who laid the grounds for progressivity ever dreamed of income tax rates at 39.6 percent. In fact, there was a floor debate at the time on whether to put a 10 percent cap in the constitutional amendment. The answer was no—largely because people thought the idea that the tax might ever rise that high too absurd to address.

But within a few very short years—the years that brought World War I—the first of these promises already lay broken. The Wilson administration didn't just take something from the wealthy; it pushed top rates on the income tax up to 67 percent. It also loaded on corporate profits taxes—so-called "excess profits" taxes—of up to 60 percent. Progressivity was crucial to FDR's mass tax. FDR made a big show of taxing the wealthy. And so, in the 1940s, average people began to pay taxes, including the success taxes of progressivity. They did so in part because they were promised that wealthier people were paying yet higher success taxes. Bastiat's fatal illusion was up and running in the United States.

Government liked the fatal illusion. "We shall tax and tax, and spend and spend, and elect and elect," said Roosevelt's adviser Harry Hopkins in a merry moment. Federal tax revenues jumped by tens of billions. There were those who questioned progressivity. But most economic thinkers and politicians, from left to right, embraced it. Even the most famous of the right-wing eminences, the Austrian economist Friedrich von Hayek, endorsed a progressive rate structure in those days.

Yet even in the 1940s and 1950s, what we know today was clear: The class-warfare part of progressivity didn't really function as advertised. In the 1940s and 1950s most Americans were paying progressive taxes for the first time. They consoled themselves with the knowledge that the wealthy were paying the highest taxes in U.S. history. At one point, the top marginal rate on the income tax was 91 percent. Even then, though, the rich had found a way to evade these taxes. They asked Washington for tickets out of this regime, and Washington handed out those tickets by inserting tiny favors to specific groups in the tax code. Eager to maintain its fatal illusion, Washington has come up with any number of justifications for its success taxes. After World War II the foremost among these was something that seems surprising today: inflation. Later Washington argued that we needed progressivity to obtain necessary revenue; as Eisenhower said at one point, "I need the money." World War II and its extensions, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and the cold war, generally meant that the nation needed resources available at any instant in case of war. Today these arguments have faded. Yet progressivity is still here—and doing even more damage, perhaps, than at other times. Here's why: We live in a watershed moment. The computer revolution has given enormous wealth to a small group of people—people whom the class-warfare sorts like to target. Even those who have never worried about such things before are now worried about a new, two-class society—the haves, who enjoy the technology bounty and the bounty of the market, versus the have-nots, the children of working people who never even got Intel stock options or bought a mutual fund. Starting new offices and new businesses, and buying home computers are things these people ought to be allowed to do. Progressivity is often what stops them. ◆

Amity Shlaes is an editorial writer at the Wall Street Journal. *This is an excerpt from her book,* The Greedy Hand.
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One last observation . . .

If His Lips Are Moving...

Karlyn Bowman on lying politicians and other matters

In 1943, in the first question of its kind, the National Opinion Research Center asked Americans to agree or disagree with this statement: It's almost impossible for anyone going into politics to stay honest these days.

Forty-eight percent agreed. A more recent question, harsher in tone, suggests Americans haven't changed their minds. In February, 55 percent told Gallup interviewers that most public officials today are liars.

While pollsters have long inquired about the truthfulness of politicians as a group, their first inquiry about the honesty of an individual politician came, it appears, in 1970. Louis Harris and Associates asked people whether they tended to agree or disagree that "the full story [about Chappaquiddick] has not been told, and I doubt Senator Kennedy has told the real truth." Sixty-four percent agreed. Since that time, the pollsters have asked about the veracity of many major and minor political figures. In 1974, when Jimmy Carter announced his candidacy, he promised Americans that he would never lie to them. In 1976, Louis Harris asked people whether they would "worry some" about a politician who made that promise. Fifty-six percent said they would.

In February 1992, after Bill Clinton's "Sixty Minutes" interview and questions about his draft status, Gallup asked whether the presidential candidates were personally honest. Sixty-five percent said George Bush was, 57 percent Pat Buchanan, 56 percent Paul Tsongas, and 39 percent Bill Clinton. In a CBS News/*New York Times* poll early that year, 55 percent said Bush had more honesty and integrity than most people in public life, 25 percent said he had an average amount, and 12 percent, less. Only 24 percent thought Bill Clinton had more, 37 percent said he had the average amount, and 20 percent, less.

The association of politics with corruption and dishonesty may be one of the reasons Americans have long shunned political careers for their children. In 1943, when Gallup inquired about a son choosing "politics as a life's work," 69 percent were opposed. When they started asking about daughters in 1991, the results were very much the same. ABC News and the *Washington Post* repeated the question this year with virtually identical results.

GO, GIRL!

In 1937, 46 percent told Gallup interviewers that they would vote for a well-qualified person for president who happed to be Jewish, and 60 percent said they would vote for a well-qualified person who happened to be Catholic. Just 33 percent said they would vote for a well-qualified woman.

Today, over 90 percent say they would vote for a qualified Jew, Catholic, or woman. Atheists are the one category of individuals in the Gallup series that have yet to achieve majority acceptance as presidential contenders. Forty-nine percent said they would vote for an atheist, but 48 percent would not.

In March, in a question that sheds a different light on support for a female candidate, NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal* asked people not about their own preferences, but about what they thought voters would do. Fifty-five percent said voters were ready to elect a woman as president, 39 percent thought they were not.

BEEN HARASSED LATELY?

Roper Starch Worldwide asked employed people a battery of questions about sexual harassment in 1991. In 1998, the survey firm returned to the subject, repeating the questions they had asked earlier. Perhaps surprisingly given the enormous amount of attention this subject gets, most workers say it's not a problem. In the new poll, just 4 percent said there was a lot of sexual harassment where they worked, 15 percent said there was some, 21 percent not much, and 54 percent no sexual harassment at all where they worked.

Around six in ten workers were completely satisfied with how their employer was dealing with the issue, and 28 percent were mostly satisfied. A mere 3 percent were not too satisfied or totally dissatisfied.

THE INSCRUTABLE SIXTIES

When told by Gallup that "many people say this country's moral and cultural values have changed a great deal since the 1960s," 32 percent said those changes have been good for the country because the country has become more tolerant, but 64 percent said they had been bad because the country has become too permissive.

GORED

Though there is nothing scientific about David Letterman's web site poll, it's fun nonetheless. When asked "who do you think played the biggest role in building the Internet," 83 percent voted for Pamela Anderson Lee, 15 percent for Bill Gates, and 2 percent for Al Gore. ◆

Karlyn Bowman is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C.

Drawing by Fred Cooper

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FOR THE PAST seven years, the Independent Women's Forum has been taking on the old establishment of feminist organizations—and winning. "The IWF has a profile almost unheard of for a group that is the new kid on the block," writes the *Boston Globe*. "In the marketplace of ideas, from the national news media all the way down to local radio, the IWF has shown its real strength....[The] IWF is well on its way to becoming the foremost media nemesis of the feminist movement."

Why has the IWF been so successful? Because the women who make up the IWF are not radical ideologues—they're businesswomen, economists, lawyers, truck drivers, and also mothers. Because the IWF promotes individual responsibility, strong families, limited government, and opportunity—policies that help *all* Americans. Because the IWF, a nonpartisan, nonprofit Washington organization, sponsors speaker events and conferences noted for their provocative and free-ranging debates. And because the IWF publishes *The Women's Quarterly*—an intellectual antidote to *Ms.*—which syndicated columnist Mona Charen praises as, "My type of women's magazine! With humor and sarcasm but also with warmth and passion, these women offer an intelligent refutation of the leading feminist nonsense that is swallowed so uncritically by the mainstream press."

"Dangerous."

– Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, on the IWF

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